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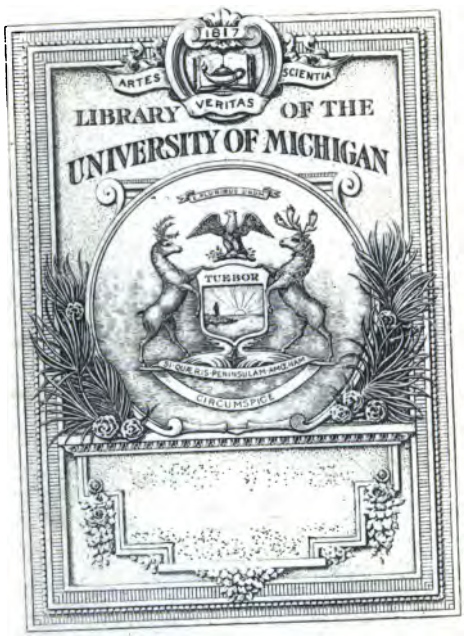
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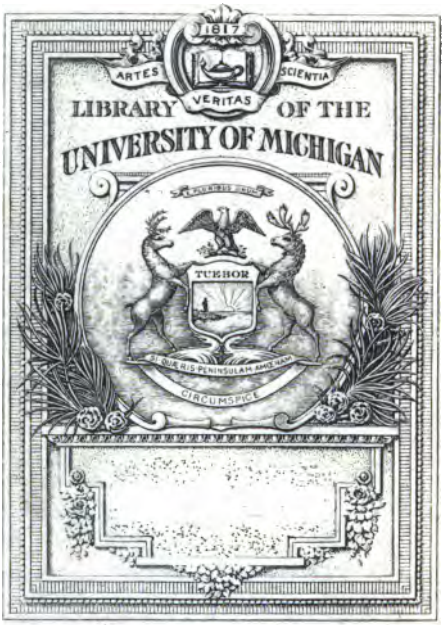
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Shakespeare's Works

SERMONS

BY THE LATE

JOHN WITHERSPOON, S.S.T.P.

President of the College of New Jersey.

A SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUME

INCLUDING SUCH SERMONS AS ARE NOT ALREADY PUBLISHED IN HIS WORKS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

BY THE SAME AUTHOR,

THE HISTORY OF A CORPORATION OF SERVANTS, AND OTHER TRACTS.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR J. DICKSON, J. FAIRBAIRN, AND J. OGLE.

1798.

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DR JOHN WITHERSPOON was descended from a respectable parentage; which had long possessed a considerable landed property in the east of Scotland. His father was minister of the parish of Yester, a few miles from Edinburgh, where he was born on the fifth day of February, 1722.* This worthy man was eminent for his piety, his literature, and for a habit of extreme accuracy in all his writings and discourses. This example contributed not a little to form in his son that

a taste

* Dr Witherspoon was lineally descended from the Rev. Mr John Knox, whose daughter Elizabeth married the famous Mr John Welsh, who strongly resembled his father in law in genius, character, and usefulness in the church: And in his line Dr Witherspoon descended from this honourable ancestry.

taſte and that love of accuracy, united with a noble ſimplicity, for which he was ſo diſtinguiſhed through his whole life. He was ſent, very young, to the public ſchool at Haddington: his father ſpared neither expence nor pains in his education. There he ſoon acquired reputation for his aſſiduity in his ſtudies, and for a native ſoundneſs of judgment, and clearneſs and quickneſs of conception, among his ſchool-fellows; many of whom have ſince filled the higheſt ſtations in the literary and political world.

At the age of fourteen, he was removed to the univerſity of Edinburgh. Here he continued, attending the different profeſſors, with a high degree of credit, in all the branches of learning, until the age of twenty-one, when he was licenſed to preach the Goſpel. In the theological hall, particularly, he was remarked for a moſt judicious taſte in ſacred criticiſm, and for a preciſion of idea and perſpicuity of expreſſion rarely attained at that early period.

Immediately on his leaving the univerſity, he was invited to be aſſiſtant miniſter with his father, with the right of ſucceſſion to the charge. But he choſe rather to accept an invitation from the pariſh of Beith, in the weſt of Scotland. Here he was ordained to the work of the Goſpel miniſtry, and ſettled with the univerſal acquieſcence, and even with the fervent attachment of the people. His character as a preacher, which rendered him ſo acceptable and popular, will come more naturally

rally before us in another place. Let it ſuffice to remark here, that, always intereſting and inſtructive in the pulpit, he was aſſiduous in the diſcharge of every parochial duty when out of it. And his preaching generally turned on thoſe great, diſtinguiſhing, and practical truths of the goſpel, which, in every Chriſtian country, moſt affect and attach the hearts of the great body of the people.

From Beith he was, after a few years, tranſlated to the large and flouriſhing town of Paiſley, ſo celebrated for its various and fine manufactures.—Here he reſided in the height of reputation and uſefulneſs; and riveted in the affections of his people, and his fellow citizens, when he was called to the preſidency of this college.

During his reſidence at Paiſley, he was invited to Dublin, in Ireland, to aſſume the charge of a numerous and reſpectable congregation in that city. He was alſo called to Rotterdam, in the Republic of the United Provinces—and to the town of Dundee, in his own country. But he could not be induced to quit a ſphere of ſuch reſpectabilty, comfort and uſefulneſs. He declined alſo, in the firſt inſtance, the invitation of the truſtees of this college. He thought it almoſt impoſſible for him to break connections at home, that had been ſo long endeared to him—to violate all the attachments and habits of the female part of his family—to leave the ſcene of his happineſs and honour—and, in his middle career, to bury himſelf

ſelf, as he apprehended, in a new and diſtant country.

But warmly urged by all thoſe friends whoſe judgment he moſt reſpected, and whoſe friendſhip he moſt eſteemed—and hoping that he might repay his ſacrifices, by greater uſefulneſs to the cauſe of the Redeemer, and to the intereſts of learning, in this new world—and knowing that this inſtitution had been conſecrated, from its foundation, to thoſe great objects to which he had devoted his life, he finally conſented, on a ſecond application, to wave every other conſideration, to croſs the ocean, and to take among us that important charge to which he had been called, with the concurrent wiſhes, and the higheſt expectations, of all the friends of the college.* Their expectations have not been diſappointed. Its reputation and ſucceſs, under his adminiſtration, have been equal to our moſt ſanguine hopes.

Almoſt the firſt benefit which it received, beſides the eclat, and the acceſſion of ſtudents, procured to it by the fame of his literary character, was the augmentation of its funds. The college has never enjoyed any reſources from the ſtate. It was founded, and has been ſupported, wholly by private liberality and zeal. And its finances, from a variety of cauſes, were in a low and declining

*Dr Witherſpoon arrived with his family at Princeton in the month of Auguſt, 1768. He was the ſixth Preſident of the College ſince its foundation in the year 1746.

clining condition, at the period when Dr Witherſpoon arrived in America. But his reputation excited an uncommon liberality in the public; and his perſonal exertions, extended from Maſſachuſetts to Virginia, ſoon raiſed its funds to a flouriſhing ſtate. The war of the revolution, indeed, afterwards, proſtrated every thing, and almoſt annihilated its reſources; yet we cannot but with gratitude recollect, how much the inſtitution owed, at that time, to his enterprize and his talents.

But the principal advantages it derived, were from his literature; his ſuperintendancy; his example as a happy model of good writing; and from the tone and taſte which he gave to the literary purſuits of the college.

In giving the outlines of the character of this great man, for I attempt no more, I ſhall begin with obſerving, that perhaps his principal merit appeared in the pulpit. He was, in many reſpects, one of the beſt models on which a young preacher could form himſelf. It was a ſingular felicity to the whole college, but eſpecially to thoſe who had the profeſſion of the miniſtry in view, to have ſuch an example conſtantly before them. Religion, by the manner in which it was treated by him, always commanded the reſpect of thoſe who heard him, even when it was not able to engage their hearts. An admirable textuary, a profound theologian, perſpicuous and ſimple in his manner; an univerſal ſcholar, acquainted,

deeply with human nature; a grave, dignified, and ſolemn ſpeaker, he brought all the advantages derived from theſe ſources to the illuſtration and enforcement of divine truth. Though not a fervent and animated orator,* he was always a ſolemn, affecting, and inſtructive preacher. It was impoſſible to hear him without attention, or to attend to him without improvement. He had a happy talent at unfolding the ſtrict and proper meaning of the ſacred writer, in any text from which he choſe to diſcourſe; at concentrating and giving perfect unity to every ſubject which he treated; and preſenting to the hearer the moſt clear and comprehenſive views of it. His ſermons

* A peculiar affection of his nerves, which always overcame him when he allowed himſelf to feel very fervently on any ſubject, obliged him, from his earlieſt entrance on public life, to impoſe a ſtrict reſtraint and guard upon his ſenſibility. He was, therefore, under the neceſſity of ſubſtituting gravity and ſerioufneſs of manner, in public ſpeaking, in the room of that fire and warmth, of which he was well capable, by nature; and which he ſo much admired in others, when managed with prudence.

He never read his ſermons, or uſed ſo much as ſhort notes, in the pulpit. His practice was, to write his ſermons at full length, and commit them to memory; but not confine himſelf to the preciſe words he had penned. He often took great liberties, in the delivery of his diſcourſes, to alter, add to, or abridge what he had written; but this never infringed upon the ſtricteſt accuracy.

mons were diſtinguiſhed for their judicious and perſpicuous diviſions—for mingling profound remarks on human life, along with the illuſtration of divine truth—and for the lucid order that reigned through the whole. In his diſcourſes, he loved to dwell chiefly on the great doctrines of divine grace, and on the diſtinguiſhing truths of the goſpel. Theſe he brought, as far as poſſible, to the level of every underſtanding, and the feeling of every heart. He ſeldom choſe to lead his hearers into ſpeculative diſcuſſions, and never to entertain them by a mere diſplay of talents. All oſtentation in the pulpit, he viewed with the utmoſt averſion and contempt. During the whole of his preſidency, he was extremely ſolicitous to train thoſe ſtudious youths, who had the miniſtry of the goſpel in view, in ſuch a manner, as to ſecure the greateſt reſpectability, as well as uſefulneſs, in that holy profeſſion. It was his conſtant advice to young preachers, never to enter the pulpit without the moſt careful preparation. It was his ambition and his hope, to render the ſacred miniſtry the moſt learned, as well as the moſt pious and exemplary body of men in the Republic.

As a writer, his ſtile is ſimple and comprehenſive—his remarks judicious, and often refined—his information, on every ſubject which he treats, accurate and extenſive—his matter always weighty and important—cloſely condenſed, and yet well arranged and clear. Simplicity, perſpi-

cuity

cuity, preciſion, comprehenſion of thought, and knowledge of the world, and of the human heart, reign in every part of his writings. Three volumes of eſſays, and five volumes of ſermons, beſides ſeveral detached diſcourſes, already publiſhed—and treating chiefly on the moſt important and practical ſubjects in religion—have deſervedly extended his reputation, not only through Britain, Ireland, and America, but through moſt of the proteſtant countries of Europe. His remarks on the nature and effects of the ſtage, enter deeply into the human heart. We find there many refined obſervations, after the example of the Meſſieurs de Port-Royal in France, not obvious to ordinary minds, but perfectly founded in the hiſtory of man, and the ſtate of ſociety. The pernicious influence of that amuſement on the public taſte and morals, was, perhaps, never more clearly elucidated. On the following intereſting ſubjects, the 'nature and neceſſity of regeneration—Juſtification by free grace, through Jeſus Chriſt; and the importance of truth in religion, or, the connexion that ſubſiſts between ſound principles and a holy practice,' there is perhaps, nothing ſuperior in the Engliſh language. But Dr Witherſpoon's talents were various. He was not only a ſerious writer, but he poſſeſſed a fund of refined humour, and delicate ſatire. A happy ſpecimen of this is ſeen in his Eccleſiaſtical Characteriſtics. The edge of his wit, in that performance, was directed againſt certain corrup-

tions

tions in principle and practice prevalent in the church of Scotland. And no attack that was ever made upon them, gave them ſo deep a wound or was ſo ſeverely felt. Dr Warburton, the celebrated Biſhop of Glouceſter, mentions the Characteriſtics with particular approbation, and expreſſes his wiſh, that the Engliſh church, as the needed too, had likewiſe ſuch a corrector.

This may be the proper place to mention his general character, as a member of the counſels and courts of the church, and the part particularly that he took in the eccleſiaſtical politics of his native country. The church of Scotland was divided into two parties, with reſpect to their ideas of eccleſiaſtical diſcipline. The one was willing to confirm, and even extend the rights of patronage—the other wiſhed, if poſſible, to abrogate, or at leaſt limit them, and to extend the rights and influence of the people, in the ſettlement and removal of miniſters. The latter were zealous for the doctrines of grace, and the articles of religion, in all their ſtrictneſs, as contained in their national confeſſion of faith. The former were willing to allow a greater latitude of opinion; and they preached in a ſtile that ſeemed to the people leſs evangelical, and leſs affecting to the heart and conſcience, than that of their opponents. In their concern, likewiſe, to exempt the clergy of their party from the unreaſonable effects of popular caprice, they too frequently protected them againſt the juſt complaints of the people. Theſe were

ſtiled

ſtiled moderate men, while their antagoniſts were diſtinguiſhed by the name of the orthodox. Dr Witherſpoon, in his church politics, early and warmly embraced the ſide of the orthodox. This he did from conviction, and a ſenſe of duty; and, by degrees, acquired ſuch an influence in their councils, that he was conſidered at length as their head and leader. Before he had acquired this influence, their councils were managed without union and addreſs, while the meaſures of the moderate party had, for a long time, been conducted by ſome of the greateſt literary characters in the nation. It had happened among the orthodox, as it often does among ſcrupulous and conſcientious men, who are not verſed in the affairs of the world, that each purſued inflexibly his own opinion, as the dictate of an honeſt conſcience. He could not be induced to make any modification of it, in order to accommodate it to the views of others. He thought that all addreſs and policy, was uſing too much management with conſcience. Hence reſulted diſunion of meaſures, and conſequent defeat—But Dr Witherſpoon's enlarged mind did not refuſe to combine 'the wiſdom of the ſerpent with the harmleſſneſs 'of the dove.' He had, probably, the principal merit of creating among them union, and harmony of deſign; of concentrating their views, and giving ſyſtem to their operations. One day, after carrying ſome important queſtions in the General Aſſembly, againſt the celebrated Dr Robert-

ſon

ſen, who was at that time conſidered as the leader of the oppoſite party, the latter ſaid to him, in a pleaſant and eaſy manner, 'I think you have 'your men better diſciplined than formerly.' 'Yes '(replied Dr Witherſpoon) by urging your poli- 'ties too far, you have compelled us to beat you 'with your own weapons.'

We have ſeen him in our own church judicatories, in America, always upright in his views—remarkable for his punctuality in attending upon them—and able to ſeize, at once, the right point of view on every queſtion—able to diſentangle the moſt embaraſſed ſubjects—clear and concluſive in his reaſonings—and from habit in buſineſs, as well as from a peculiar ſoundneſs of judgment, always conducting every diſcuſſion to the moſt ſpeedy and deciſive termination. The church has certainly loſt in him, one of her greateſt lights; and, if I may uſe the term in eccleſiaſtical affairs, one of her greateſt politicians.

Before entering on his talents as a preſident, ſuffer me, in a ſentence or two, to call to your mind his ſocial qualities. When not engaged in the great and ſerious buſineſſes of life, he was one of the moſt companionable of men. Furniſhed with a rich fund of anecdote, both amuſing and inſtructive; his moments of relaxation were as entertaining, as his ſerious ones were fraught with improvement. One quality remarkable, and highly deſerving imitation in him was, 'his 'attention to young perſons.' He never ſuffered

ed an opportunity to eſcape him of imparting the moſt uſeful advice to them, according to their circumſtances, when they happened to be in his company. And this was always done in ſo agreeable a way, that they could neither be inattentive to it, nor was it poſſible to forget it.

On his domeſtic virtues I ſhall only ſay, he was an affectionate huſband, a tender parent, and a kind maſter; to which I may add, he was a ſincere and a warm friend.—But, I haſten to conſider him as a ſcholar, and a director of the ſyſtem of education in the college.

An univerſal ſcholar himſelf, he endeavoured to eſtabliſh the ſyſtem of education in this inſtitution, upon the moſt extenſive and reſpectable baſis, that its ſituation and its finances would admit. Formerly, the courſe of inſtruction had been too ſuperficial; and its metaphyſics and philoſophy were too much tinctured with the dry and uninſtructive forms of the ſchools. This, however, was by no means to be imputed as a defect, to thoſe great and excellent men, who had preſided over the inſtitution before him; but rather to the recent origin of the country—the imperfection of its ſtate of ſociety—and to the ſtate of literature in it. Since his preſidency mathematical ſcience has received an extenſion, that was not known before in the American ſeminaries. He introduced into philoſophy, all the moſt liberal and modern improvements of Europe. He extended the philoſophical courſe to embrace the

the general principles of policy and public law; he incorporated with it a found and rational metaphyſics—equally remote from the doctrines of fatality and contingency—from the barrenneſs and dogmatiſm of the ſchools—and from the exceſſive refinements of thoſe contradictory, but equally impious ſects of ſcepticiſm, who wholly deny the exiſtence of matter, or maintain that nothing but matter exiſts in the univerſe.

He laid the foundation of a courſe of hiſtory in the college—and the principles of taſte, and the rules of good writing, were both happily explained by him, and exemplified in his manner. The ſtile of learning, if you will allow me the phraſe, has been changed by him. Literary inquiries and improvements have become more liberal, more extenſive, and more profound. An admirable faculty for governing, and of exciting the emulation of the young gentlemen under his care, contributed to give ſucceſs to all his deſigns for perfecting the courſe of inſtruction. The numbers of men of diſtinguiſhed talents, in the different liberal profeſſions, in this country, who have received the elements of their education under him, teſtify his ſervices to the college. Under his auſpices have been formed a large proportion of the clergy of our church; and to his inſtructions, America owes many of her moſt diſtinguiſhed patriots and legiſlators.

Thus he proceeded, guiding with uncommon reputation and ſucceſs the courſe of education in

this inſtitution, until the war of the American revolution ſuſpended his functions and diſperſed the college.

Here he entered upon a new ſcene, and appeared in a new character; widely differing from any, in which he had been heretofore preſented to the public. Yet, here alſo, he ſhone with equal luſtre; and his talents as a legiſlator and ſenator ſhewed the extent and the variety of the powers of his mind. There are few foreigners who can, with ſuch facility as he did, lay aſide their prejudices, and enter into the ideas and habits of a new country, and a new ſtate of ſociety. He became almoſt at once an American, on his landing among us, and in the unjuſt war which Great Britain waged againſt us, he immediately adopted the views, and participated in the councils of the Americans. His diſtinguiſhed abilities ſoon pointed him out to the citizens of New-Jerſey, as one of the moſt proper delegates to that convention which formed their republican conſtitution. In this reſpectable aſſembly he appeared, to the aſtoniſhment of all the profeſſors of the law, as profound a civilian, as he had before been known to be a philoſopher and divine.

From the revolutionary committees and conventions of the ſtate, he was ſent, early in the year, 1776, as a repreſentative of the people of New-Jerſey to the congreſs of United America; he was ſeven years a member of that illuſtrious body, which, under providence, in the face of innumerable

numerable difficulties and dangers, led us on to the eſtabliſhment of our independence. Always firm in the moſt gloomy and formidable aſpects of public affairs, he always diſcovered the greateſt reach and preſence of mind, in the moſt embarraſſing ſituations.

It is impoſſible here to enter into all his political ideas. It is but juſtice however to obſerve, that on almoſt all ſubjects on which he differed from the majority of his brethren in congreſs, his principles have been juſtified by the reſult. I ſhall ſelect only one or two examples. He conſtantly oppoſed the expenſive mode of ſupplying the army by commiſſion, which was originally adopted; and combated it, until after a long experience of its ill effects, he, in conjunction with a few firm and judicious aſſociates, prevailed to have it done by contract.

He oppoſed, at every emiſſion after the firſt or ſecond, and even hazarded his popularity for a time by the ſtrenuouſneſs of his oppoſition, that paper currency which gave ſuch a wound to public credit, and which would have defeated the revolution, if any thing could.

In the formation of the original confederation, he complained of the jealouſy and ambition of the individual ſtates, which were not willing to entruſt the general government, with adequate powers for the common intereſt. He then pronounced inefficacy upon it. But he complained and remonſtrated in vain.

Overruled, however, at that time, in theſe and in other objects of importance, he had the ſatisfaction of living to ſee America revert, in almoſt every inſtance, to his original ideas—ideas founded on a ſound and penetrating judgment, and matured by deep reflection, and an extenſive obſervation of men and things. But I forbear to trace his political career farther; and ſhall only add here, that while he was thus engaged in ſerving his country in the character of a civilian, he did not lay aſide his miniſtry. He gladly embraced every opportunity of preaching, and of diſcharging the other duties of his office, as a goſpel miniſter. This he conſidered as his higheſt character, and honour in life.

The college having been collected as ſoon as poſſible after its diſperſion, inſtruction was recommenced under the immediate care of the vice-preſident.* Dr Witherſpoon's name, however, continued to add celebrity to the inſtitution, and it has fully recovered its former reputation.

The glorious ſtruggle for our liberties drawing to an honourable period, and the doctor feeling age advancing upon him, was deſirous of reſigning his place in congreſs: and would have fain retired, in a meaſure, from the burdens of the college.

But notwithſtanding his wiſh for repoſe, he was

* The reverend Dr Samuel S. Smith, who was unanimouſly choſen Dr Witherſpoon's ſucceſſor on the 6th day of May, 1795.

was induced, through his attachment to the inſtitution, over which he had ſo long preſided, once more to croſs the ocean to promote its benefit. The fruit of that voyage was not indeed anſwerable to our wiſhes; but we are not the leſs indebted to his enterprize and zeal.

After his return to this country, finding nothing to obſtruct his entering on that retirement, which was now become more dear to him; he withdrew, in a great meaſure, except on ſome important occaſions, from the exerciſe of thoſe public functions that were not immediately connected with the duties of his office, as preſident of the college, or his character as a miniſter of the goſpel.

Accuſtomed to order and regularity in buſineſs from his youth, he perſevered in his attention to them through his whole life. And I may add there was nothing in which his punctuality and exactneſs were more ſacredly obſerved, than in the devotional exerciſes of the chriſtian life. Beſides the daily devotions of the cloſet, and the family, it was his ſtated practice to obſerve the laſt day of every year, with his family, as a day of faſting, humiliation and prayer: and it was alſo his practice, to ſet apart days for ſecret faſting and prayer, as occaſion ſuggeſted.

Bodily infirmities began at length to come upon him. For more than two years before his death, he was afflicted with the loſs of ſight; which contributed to haſten the progreſs of his other

other diſorders. Theſe he bore with a patience, and even a cheerfulneſs, rarely to be met with, in the moſt eminent for wiſdom and piety. Nor would his active mind, and his deſire of uſefulneſs to the end, permit him, even in this ſituation, to deſiſt from the exerciſe of his miniſtry, and his duties to the college, as far as his health and ſtrength would admit. He was frequently led into the pulpit, both at home and abroad, during his blindneſs; and always acquitted himſelf with his uſual accuracy, and frequently, with more than his uſual ſolemnity and animation. And we all recollect the propriety and dignity with which he preſided at the laſt commencement. He was bleſt with the uſe of his reaſoning powers to the very laſt.

At length, however, he ſunk under the accumulated preſſure of his infirmities; and on the 15th day of November, 1794, in the ſeventy third year of his age, he retired to his eternal reſt, full of honour and full of days—there to receive the plaudit of his Lord, "well done thou good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, be thou ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

SERMON I.

Miniſterial Character and Duty.

2 Cor. iv. 13.

We alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak.

TO underſtand what ought to be the character, and what principles ſhould animate the conduct of a miniſter of the goſpel, cannot be without profit, even to a private Chriſtian. It will teach him whom to prefer, when he is called, in providence, to make a choice. It will teach him to hold ſuch in reputation for their office-ſake, and to improve the privilege of a regular goſpel-miniſtry, if he himſelf is favoured with it. And I think it muſt incline him to make daily ſupplication to the Lord of the harveſt, to ſend forth faithful labourers into his harveſt.

But though there were no ſuch general advantage to be derived from it, my particular charge, and the very aſpect of this audience, would eaſily

juſtify me in making this, for once, the immediate ſubject of diſcourſe.

Now if we would know the character of a faithful miniſter, we cannot better, or more immediately reach our purpoſe, than by looking into the character, and obſerving the conduct, and ſprings of action, of the Apoſtles of our Lord, who received their commiſſions immediately from himſelf, and were not only the firſt, but the beſt and moſt ſucceſsful miniſters, that ever were employed in the church of Chriſt.

The Apoſtle Paul, whoſe call was ſo ſingular, and whoſe labours were ſo diſtinguiſhed, has, in his Epiſtles to the ſeveral churches, planted or watered by him, given us a great light into the chief aims he had in the exerciſe of the miniſtry. In this chapter, and the preceeding part of this Epiſtle, he ſhews the Corinthians, with what viſible faithfulneſs and ſincerity he had acted, and what diligence he had uſed in promoting their eternal happineſs.

To ſave time, I forbear going through the connection of his diſcourſe, and only obſerve, that in the words of our text, he ſhows what kept him faithful, and influenced him to ſo much diligence in the work to which he was called, by alluding to an expreſſion in the 116th Pſalm. It is written, 'I have believed, there-'fore have I ſpoken. We alſo believe, and 'therefore ſpeak.' In this he intimates, that our inward perſuaſion of the great truths of the ever-

everlasting gospel, could not but have a powerful influence upon him and others, to press the important message, and watch over the souls of those committed to their charge.

In discoursing further at this time, I intend to confine myself to this single truth, which may be easily deduced from the text: that one of the most essentially necessary, and the most extensively useful qualifications of a good minister, is, that he be a good man, that he have a firm belief of that gospel he is called to preach, and a lively sense of religion upon his own heart. After I shall have explained and confirmed this observation, I will conclude with some practical reflections.

Though I have mentioned real religion as one of the most essentially necessary qualifications, I am not ignorant, that taking the words in a strict sense, gifts are more necessary to the being of the ministry, than even grace itself. To make the efficacy of the ordinances to depend upon the inward state of the administrator, is a Popish error, and is expressly guarded against by the Assembly of Divines, in our shorter Catechisms in the following words: 'The Sacraments,' and it is equally true of every other ordinance, 'become effectual to salvation, not from any virtue 'in them, or in him that doth administer them, 'but only by the blessing of Christ, and the 'working of his spirit in them that by faith receive them.'

But ſome degree of capacity is evidently neceſſary in the moſt abſolute ſenſe. A man who is altogether void of knowledge and utterance, or who is deaf and dumb, may be a ſaint, but cannot be a miniſter. This conceſſion, however, takes nothing from the force of the obſervation, that real religion is of the greateſt importance, and moſt abſolutely neceſſary to the faithful diſcharge of a miniſter's ſacred truſt. That I may ſet this in as clear and ſtrong a light as I am able, let me intreat your attention to the following obſervations:

I. Real religion in a miniſter, will make him knowing, and able for his work. It is neceſſary for any one who intends himſelf for the office of the miniſtry, by diligent ſtudy, and the uſe of thoſe means, with which God in his providence hath furniſhed him, to improve his underſtanding, and acquire a ſtock of knowledge, that he may be a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. In this he can have no ſuch incitement as concern for his maſter's glory. Nay, he that is truly religious, is taught of God, the beſt of maſters, and will have ſome of his moſt profitable leſſons from his own experience.

Let me the rather intreat your attention to this, that thoſe who are moſt apt to diſparage piety are alſo apt to ſpeak in terms of high approbation on the ſubject of literature and ſcience.

—Obſerve

—Obſerve, therefore, that true religion ſerves both to give a man that knowledge which is neceſſary to a miniſter, and to direct and to turn into its proper channel the knowledge which he may otherwiſe acquire. It is an approved maxim in every ſcience, that practical and experimental knowledge far exceeds that which is merely ſpeculative; at leaſt, though the laſt may make the prettieſt ſhow, the firſt is by much to be preferred for uſe. Any wiſe man, if he was to go a dangerous voyage, would readily prefer, as his pilot, one, who had much experience, and had ſailed often that way himſelf, to one, who had ſtudied navigation in the moſt perfect manner aſhore. So, my brethren, every man who regards his ſoul would chooſe for his ſpiritual guide, one, who appears to have the wiſdom to ſave his own, and would expect by him to be beſt directed, how to avoid the rocks and ſhelves in his paſſage, through this dangerous and tempeſtuous ocean of life.

But if this maxim holds true in other ſcience, it holds yet more ſtrongly in religion, which cannot be truly known unleſs it be felt. There is an inſeparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty; and therefore he that is a ſtranger to the one, is ignorant of the other. I am not inſenſible that a bad man may eſpouſe, and plead for a great part of the ſyſtem of divine truth; but as he cannot cordially embrace it, ſo I am inclined to think that he never truly

underſtands it. The Apoſtle Paul declares, that it is only by the Spirit of God which is given to every real chriſtian, and more eſpecially to every faithful miniſter, that a man is enabled to treat rightly of divine things: 'Now we have receiv-'ed, not the ſpirit of the world, but the ſpirit 'which is of God, that we might know the 'things that are freely given to us of God; 'which things we ſpeak, not in the words which 'man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy 'Ghoſt teacheth, comparing ſpiritual things 'with ſpiritual. But the natural man receiveth 'not the things of the Spirit of God, for they 'are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know 'them, for they are ſpirtually diſcerned.' As the real Chriſtian from that character is beſt diſpoſed to ſeek after, ſo he is by the ſame means beſt fitted to improve and apply his knowledge of ſpiritual things. This will appear, if we conſider what ought to be the great work of a miniſter. He hath to do chiefly with the hearts and conſciences of his people. His buſineſs is to convince the ungodly; to awaken the ſecure; to enlighten the ignorant; to direct and ſtrengthen the weak in the faith, and in general as a wiſe phyſician, to adminiſter the medicine proper to the various conditions and diſorders of his hearers. Now it muſt, at firſt ſight, appear, that he who is a ſtranger to the power of godlineſs, and knows nothing of the ſpiritual life himſelf, muſt be utterly unfit for diſcerning how it thrives, or

aſſiſting

aſſiſting and promoting it in others. That man muſt ſurely be moſt powerful in ſearching, and moſt ſkilful in guiding the conſciences of others, who has been accuſtomed to examine and direct his own.

I only farther obſerve upon this particular, that true religion will purify, and direct into its proper channel, the knowledge he may otherwiſe acquire. It is a great miſtake to think, found learning is an enemy to religion, and to ſuppoſe that an ignorant miniſtry is the beſt or ſafeſt. There is no branch of human knowledge of which a divine may not be the better, or which a good man will not improve to the glory of God and the good of others; though ſome of them are more important than others; and it is neceſſary to give to any of them, only ſuch proportion of our time, as is conſiſtent with our great and principal aim. Now true religion is the great preſervative againſt miſtake or abuſe of any kind on this ſubject. A bad man is apt to ſtudy, merely to gratify his own fancy; and there is a falſe luxury and delicacy in feeding the mind as well as the body. A bad man is alſo exceedingly prone to intellectual pride and ſelf-ſufficiency; than which, there is not a vice more dangerous in itſelf, or more contrary to the character of a miniſter of the New Teſtament. But he who is ſanctified by divine grace, as he has every motive to diligence in acquiring knowledge, ſo the

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ſingle purpoſe to which he will wiſh to apply it, is to ſerve God in the goſpel of his Son.

II. Real religion in a miniſter will make him happy and chearful, ready and willing to do his duty. There is a great difference between the prompt, and ſpeedy obedience of a ſervant who loves his maſter and his work, and the reluctant labour of him who only deceives him, that he may eat of his bread. A truly pious man, undertakes the office of the miniſtry from love to God, with a view to promote his glory, and what he hath counted his intereſt in the world, viz. The welfare of the ſouls of men. An unholy miniſter undertakes this employment only as a trade to earn by, and has it at leaſt as his higheſt aim to promote his own worldly advantage. It is eaſy to ſee in what a different manner theſe different perſons will act, and in what different light they will view the ſacred duties of their function. He who truly believes the goſpel and loves its Author, will reckon it his higheſt honour when he is called to recommend it to the belief of others. He will be apt to teach, and will find a pleaſure in carrying his meſſage, beſides the reward he expects from him who employs him, and will undergo with chearfulneſs every fatigue he is ſubjected to in the execution of his office. On the other hand, he who is actuated by a contrary principle, though he is obliged, that he may raiſe his wages, in ſome

ſome ſort to do his duty; yet how heavily muſt it go on, how tedious and burdenſome muſt it be, both in preparation and performance! He will count his ſervice at the altar, and his work among his people, as a toil and drudgery, and reckon all that redeemed time that he can ſave for himſelf, from the duties of his office.

Perhaps it may be thought that there lies a ſtrong objection againſt this obſervation from experience; as it appears that ſuch miniſters as have leaſt of religion, commonly go moſt lightly under the charge, and are far from feeling any burden in what is committed to them; whereas the moſt pious and faithful miniſters ſeem to have a weight upon their ſpirits, and ſuch a concern for the ſalvation of their people, as cannot but take much from their chearfulneſs in the work to which they are called. In anſwer to this, obſerve, that an unfaithful miniſter is not eaſy and chearful becauſe his work is agreeable to him, but becauſe he takes as little of it as may be, and ſeeks his pleaſure more than his duty. Certain it is, that the work of the miniſtry muſt be irkſome and uneaſy to him that believes not, except ſo far as he makes it ſubſervient to ambition, and diſplays his own talents when he ſhould be feeding his people's ſouls. This, I confeſs, which the Apoſtle juſtly calls preaching ourſelves, may be abundantly gratifying to the moſt corrupt heart. On the other hand, that concern for his people which is upon the heart

of

of every faithful paſtor, is far from being inconſiſtent with the moſt ſolid peace and deſirable pleaſure ariſing from the diſcharge of his duty. It is like the exerciſe of pity and compaſſion to the diſtreſſed, in him, who is acting for their relief, which, though in ſome ſenſe painful, is yet accompanied with the approbation of God, and conſcience, as flowing from a rightly diſpoſed mind, and therefore to be cheriſhed and cultivated rather than ſuppreſſed. There is a time for every good man to mourn, and a time to rejoice, and perhaps the one is even more ſalutary than the other; for we are told, that God will appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, 'to give 'unto them beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy for 'mourning, and the garment of praiſe for the 'ſpirit of heavineſs.'

III. Real religion in a miniſter will make him faithful, and impartial in the diſcharge of his truſt. The God in whoſe preſence we ſtand, and in whoſe name we ſpeak, is no reſpecter of perſons, and neither ſhould we be, in doing his work. There is commonly a great variety of perſons, of different ſtations, and of different characters, committed to the inſpection of a miniſter; the pleaſing or diſpleaſing of whom, has a conſiderable influence on his wordly eaſe and intereſt. This is a great temptation to be unfaithful, and often leads to ſpeak unto them "ſmooth things, and prophecy deceit" or at leaſt, not to deal with all that freedom and impar-

partiality, that his duty to God requires. In every unregenerate man, worldly intereſt in one ſhape or another, either vanity or gain, is the ſupreme motive of action; and therefore, as moſt men are impatient of reproof, it cannot be ſuppoſed, that an unſanctified miniſter will venture to provoke their diſpleaſure, or to gall them with unacceptable truths. The favour of the great, or the applauſe of the multitude, he certainly will ſeek more than the edification of any. On the other hand, he who truly fears God, and believes what he teaches, will act with faithfulneſs and boldneſs. He will remember, that if he ſeek to pleaſe men, he cannot be the ſervant of Chriſt. He will therefore no farther obtain, and indeed no farther wiſh to obtain their favour, than as a diligent diſcharge of his duty approves him to their conſciences in the ſight of God, or forces the approbation of the impartial, notwithſtanding the reſentment of particular offenders. It is only the fear of God can deliver us from the fear of man. I do not pretend that all who fear God are wholly delivered from it; but ſurely, bad men muſt be far more under the government of this ſinful principle. The one may fail occaſionally, the other is corrupted wholly. There are two reaſons which incline me particularly to inſiſt on that faithfulneſs, which can only flow from true piety.

1. That preaching, in order to be uſeful, muſt be very particular, and cloſe in the application. General

General truths, and abſtract reaſoning have little or no influence upon the hearers, as the ignorant cannot, and the wiſe will not apply them to themſelves.

2. The other reaſon is, that private admonition, and perſonal reproof, are a great part of a miniſter's duty, and a duty that cannot be performed by any man who hath not a ſteady regard to the preſence and command of that God, who hath ſet him to watch for the ſouls of his people, as one that muſt give an account.

IV. Real religion in a miniſter will make him active and laborious in his work. Diligence is abſolutely neceſſary to the right diſcharge of the paſtoral duties, whether public or private. It requires no ſmall attention and labour to ſeek out fit and acceptable words, as the preacher expreſſes it, to ſtir up the attention of the inconſiderate, to awaken ſecure, and convince obſtinate ſinners, to unmaſk the covered hearts of hypocrites, to ſet right the erring, and encourage the fearful. An unbelieving miniſter muſt be careleſs and ſlothful. As he is unconcerned about the ſucceſs of his work, he cannot have any great concern about the manner of performance. But he who believes the unſpeakable importance of what he is employed about, both to himſelf, and his people, cannot fail to be diligent. He knows, that he himſelf muſt anſwer to God for the care he has taken of the ſouls committed to his charge, and that if he does not

not faithfully warn the wicked to turn from their ways, their blood will be required at his hand.

Oh! my brethren, what a ſtriking conſideration is this, to ſuppoſe ourſelves interrogated by the Supreme Judge, concerning every ſinner under our charge! Did you earneſtly warn this unhappy ſoul, by earneſt exhortations in public, and by ſerious affectionate expoſtulations in private to conſider his ways? It is an eaſy thing, by a partial or curſory performance of our duty, to ſcreen ourſelves from the cenſure of our fellow men; but to ſtand at the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, and anſwer there for our diligence, is a more awful trial.

Will not alſo a concern for his peoples intereſt, animate a pious miniſter to diligence? If he is truly pious, as he loves God, he loves his brother alſo. The Apoſtle Paul ſays, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perſuade men." If a man in good earneſt, believes, that everlaſting miſery muſt be the portion of all who die in an unrenewed ſtate, what pains will he not take, to prevent ſinners from going to that place of torment?

One who could ſee a fellow creature, in the rage of a fever, ruſhing to the brink of a precipice, and not reſtrain him, would fall under laſting infamy. Muſt not the ſame compaſſion move the heart of a ſerious perſon, who ſees his fellow-ſinners going blindfold to the pit of perdition?

It is their not believing theſe things, that makes them ſo fearleſs in ſinning; if you truly believ them, will you not make an effort to alarm them

There are no motives like theſe to diligence,—he that believes, will certainly ſpeak.

V. In the laſt place, real religion will make a miniſter ſucceſsful in his work. This it does, both as it fits him for doing his duty to his people, which has been illuſtrated above, and as it adds to his precepts the force of his example. Firſt, it makes him ſucceſsful, as it fits him for his duty. It is true indeed, that God only can give the bleſſing upon a miniſter's labours, and that he can ſave by many, or by few, by the weakeſt, as well as by the ableſt inſtrument; yet we ſee from experience, that in all ordinary caſes, he proportions the ſucceſs to the propriety, or ſufficiency of the means. Neither is there any ſurer mark, that God intends effectual benefit to any part of the world or the church, than when he raiſes and commiſſions men eminently qualified to plead his cauſe. Therefore, real piety, even in this reſpect, contributes to a miniſter's ſucceſs. If diligence in all other things produces ſucceſs, it muſt be ſo alſo in the miniſtry. If he that lays out his ground with the greateſt judgment, prepares and dreſſes it with the greateſt care, has the moſt plentiful crop; if the ſhepherd that waits moſt diligently upon his flock, feeds them in the beſt paſture, and leads them to the ſafeſt ſhelter, has the moſt increaſe; then that miniſter, who does his duty moſt wiſely and powerfully, will alſo ſee moſt of the fruit of his labours.

But real and unaffected yet viſible ſerioufneſs, has

has alſo its own proper additional influence on a miniſter's ſucceſs. An apparent and viſible impreſſion upon the ſpeaker's mind, of what he ſays, gives it an inexpreſſible weight with the hearers. There is a piercing heat, a penetrating force, in that which flows from the heart, which diſtinguiſhes it not only from the coldneſs of indifference, but alſo, from the falſe fire of enthuſiaſm or vain glory. Beſides all this, the example of a pious miniſter, is a conſtant inſtruction to his people. It ratifies his doctrine while he not only charges them to do what he ſays, but to be what he is. This will receive much illuſtration from its contrary.

A miniſter who has a careleſs, untender walk, defeats, by his life, the intent of his preaching. Though in reaſon, it cannot juſtify any one in diſobeying wholeſome inſtructions, that the inſtructor deſpiſes them himſelf; yet it is one of the moſt common excuſes men make for themſelves, and few excuſes ſeem to ſet their conſciences more at eaſe. Looſe and careleſs perſons think themſelves quite at liberty to deſpiſe the reproofs of their paſtor, if, while he teaches others he teaches not himſelf.

Nay, not only is it thus with the profane, but even thoſe who have the greateſt regard for religion, are not ſo much affected with the ſame truths, when ſpoken by one they think indifferent about them, as when ſpoken by one, who ſeems to feel what he ſpeaks, and who lives as he teaches.

Experience greatly confirms the whole of this reaſoning—for wherever an eminently pious miniſter has lived, and laboured long, there is commonly to be found the moſt knowing, ſerious, ſober-minded, and judicious people: nay, the very memory of ſuch a miniſter is often long continued after he is gone, and his example is propoſed by his hearers to their children's children.

From all theſe conſiderations, I conclude, that the moſt important qualification of a good miniſter, is, to be a believing preacher, and that, if he ſaves his own ſoul, he will be the probable mean of ſaving them that hear him.

I proceed now to make ſome improvement of the ſubject.

Reverend Fathers and Brethren;

As we would wiſh our people to do, let us take heed how we hear, and make a faithful application to ourſelves, of what hath been ſaid upon the ſubject. Let it engage us to a ſerious examination of ourſelves, leſt while we preach the goſpel to others, we ourſelves ſhould be reprobates. This ought to be the ſubject of our frequent and ſerious thoughts, for ſeveral reaſons. We are in danger of thinking ourſelves too eaſily ſafe, by comparing that outward regularity, to which our office itſelf, even from ſecular motives, obliges us, with the licentious extravagance of profane ſinners. We are in danger of miſtaking our frequent thinking and ſpeaking of the things of God

God, in the way of our calling, for an evidence of true religion, in ourſelves. We may alſo, perhaps, miſtake thoſe gifts with which God hath furniſhed us, for the benefit of his own people, as the fruits of the Spirit, and of gracious diſpoſitions in our hearts. A miniſter is as much liable to ſelf-deceit as others, and in ſome reſpects more ſo. We have therefore much need, often to make trial of our ſtate, as well as to give all diligence to make our own calling and election ſure.

But let us beware of imagining, that this diſcourſe is only applicable to ſuch as have no real faith in Chriſt. God forbid! that there were any miniſter among us, a complete unbeliever, counting the goſpel a fable. But faith, and every other gracious diſpoſition grafted upon it, are capable of many degrees of improvement and ſtrength; and in proportion to the ſtrength of our faith, and the impreſſion we have of divine things, will be our diligence, and conſequently our ſucceſs, in the work of the miniſtry. Let us therefore impreſs our minds, with a more and more lively ſenſe, of the important truths which we teach and hear. Let us not ſtarve ourſelves, while we are feeding others: but ſtudy to arrive at a greater degree of love to God, and delight in him; a greater conformity to his bleſſed image, in purity of heart, and integrity of life. Let us in a ſpecial manner, ſtudy to attain to more and more intimate communion with God in ſecret which is the ſign of our dependance upon him,

and the very exerciſe of love to him, which is the means of conſtancy, and the ſource of joy in religion.

Above all, let us ſet our affections upon the things that are above, where our Redeemer ſits, at his Father's right hand. As our profeſſion is to be pilgrims, and ſtrangers in the earth, to live by faith, and not by ſight; let us ſtudy, to raiſe our hopes of, and deſire after, the heavenly inheritance. By this, we ſhall not only believe, but know and feel the value of true religion, which cannot fail to make us diligent in ſeeking the good of others.

Oh! my brethren, what reaſon have we to be inwardly aſhamed at the weakneſs of our faith, and the coldneſs of our love, as they ſhew themſelves, by our indifference in the duties of our office! We are often ready both to complain and wonder, that our hearers are ſo little affected with the moſt awful conſiderations; that they can hear with indifference of everlaſting happineſs, and ſit without fear under the denunciations of eternal wrath; that we cannot perſuade them, it is of importance to think what ſhall become of them for ever. But is it not alſo to be wondered at, that we ourſelves can often ſpeak of theſe things with ſo little emotion? Can we ever be ſufficiently affected with the danger of our hearers, when we conſider, that we muſt either ſave them by convincing and converting them now, or deliver our own ſouls, by witneſſing, juſ-

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tifying, and perhaps pleading for their condemnation at the laſt day? However plain and ſimple theſe truths are, of the final judgment of miniſters and people, they are quite unfathomable in their meaning and importance to both. It is ſtrange that we can think of them without the deepeſt concern, or even ſpeak of them without tears.

Let us pray that the Lord would encreaſe our faith, that believing we may ſpeak, and that our ſpeech may be with ſuch efficacy, by the bleſſing of God, as many ſinners may be thereby brought to everlaſting life; that we may approve ourſelves to him that ſent us; and that when Chriſt, the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, we may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

SERMON

SERMON II.

Man in his Natural State.

REV. iii. 17.

Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

IN order to preach the goſpel with ſucceſs, it is neceſſary that we ſhould begin, by eſtabliſhing the great and fundamental truths, on which all the reſt are built, and to which they conſtantly refer. Nay, it is neceſſary that we ſhould often look back to theſe, and ſee that we be not off the foundation, or that it be not weakly, or imperfectly laid. Of this ſort, I take the guilt, miſery, and weakneſs of our nature to be; and therefore have choſen the words now read, as the ſubject of diſcourſe

diſcourſe, in which the Spirit of God reproves the ſufficiency, and ſelf-righteouſneſs of the church of Laodicea.

" Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed in goods, &c." I ſuppoſe you will all eaſily underſtand, that the words are figurative, and are ſpoken entirely with a view to the ſpiritual ſtate of that church. In this light, let us conſider what is preciſely their meaning.

We may either ſuppoſe, that this charge is brought againſt the church of Laodicea, becauſe there were many there, under the profeſſion of the goſpel, who were notwithſtanding, ſtill in a natural unrenewed ſtate—ſtrangers to the power of religion; of which, their being thus unhumbled, and inſenſible of their guilt and miſery, was the evidence; and for which, the remedy is preſcribed in the following words: " I counſel thee to buy of me gold, ' tried in the fire, that thou mayeſt be rich, and white ' raiment that thou mayeſt be clothed, and that the ' ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee.'

Or we may ſuppoſe, that this reproof was in a great meaſure applicable to them all in general, believers and unbelievers; the beſt of them, being exceedingly prone to truſt in themſelves, that they were righteous; inſtead of that humble dependence on the merit and grace of their Redeemer, which ought not only to be the refuge of the ſinner,

ner, but the confidence of the ſaint. And there is no queſtion, that this is a proper caution to profeſſing Chriſtians in every age, to beware of ſplitting on the rock of ſelf-ſufficiency.

But as this diſpoſition reigns in the heart of every one that is yet at a diſtance from God, is the foundation of their ſecurity and impenitence, and is what they muſt be brought off from before they can be reconciled to God; it is for their benefit that I chiefly deſign this diſcourſe, though it may alſo be uſeful, and ſhall be in part applied to the children of God. It is an affecting thought when purſued to its conſequences; yet, alas! it is unqueſtionably true, that in every aſſembly, ſuch as this, of profeſſing Chriſtians, there are not a few, who are in "the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity," under the wrath of God, and liable to the condemning ſentence of his law; and at the ſame time, that the far greater part of them are ignorant of it, and know that they are "wretched, and poor, and blind, and naked."

In diſcourſing farther upon this ſubject, therefore, I ſhall,

I. Endeavour to prove and illuſtrate this truth that all mankind are by nature in a ſtate of ſin and miſery, under the bondage of corruption, and liable to the wrath of God.

II. I ſhall briefly ſhew you, that being brought to a lively ſenſe, and genuine conviction of this, is the

the firſt and a neceſſary ſtep to the ſaving knowledge of God in Chriſt.—And, in the laſt place, ſhall make ſome practical improvement of the ſubject.

I. In the firſt place, then, I am to prove and illuſtrate this truth, that all mankind are, by nature, in a ſtate of ſin and miſery, under the bondage of corruption, and liable to the wrath of God. What is ſaid in this paſſage of the Laodiceans, is univerſally true of the poſterity of Adam. Unleſs an inward and eſſential change has been wrought upon them by the grace of God, they are 'wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' It is alſo true of them, as well as the of Laodiceans, that they know it not; but vainly preſume themſelves to be rich, and increaſed with goods, and to have need of nothing. If theſe two things are jointly true of many of you my hearers, there is nothing in which you can have ſo great a concern; therefore, let me earneſtly beſeech your moſt ſerious attention to what ſhall be ſaid, as the ſucceſs of this conviction is neceſſary to your underſtanding, or profiting by any other part of divine truth, as I ſhall afterwards ſhew you.

The proof of the truth here aſſerted, can be only of two kinds: 1. From Scripture, which is the teſtimony of God declaring it; 2. From the viſible ſtate of the world, and our own experience finding it to be ſo

1. That all mankind are by nature in a ſtate of

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ſin and miſery, appears from the expreſs and repeated teſtimony of the word of God. And this teſtimony we have, not only in particular paſſages carrying the truth, but in the ſtrain and ſpirit of the whole, and the ſeveral diſpenſations of Divine providence there recorded, which are all of them built upon this ſuppoſition, and intended to remedy this univerſal evil.

See what God declares: Gen. vi. 5. 'And God 'ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great in the 'earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts 'of his heart, was only evil continually.' And again, 'the imagination of man's heart is evil from his 'youth.' We may take the Pſalmiſt David's teſtimony of himſelf, as a ſample of the reſt of mankind; and indeed he plainly intimates that it is a common calamity: 'Who can underſtand his errors? Cleanſe 'thou me from ſecret faults. Behold! I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive 'me.'

We may take alſo the teſtimony of the Apoſtle Paul in his epiſtle to the Romans, which is the more full to our preſent purpoſe, that as he had never been at Rome, he is there laying the foundation of religion in general, and the Chriſtian diſpenſation in particular, by a clear and explicit proof of the need the world had of a Saviour, from its univerſal corruption and depravity. See then what he ſays—'What then? Are we better than they? 'No, in no wiſe; for we have before proved both 'Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under ſin.

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As it is written, 'There is none righteous, no not 'one.' And again—'Now we know that what 'things ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who 'are under the law, that every mouth may be ſtop-'ed, and all the world may become guilty before 'God.—for all have ſinned and come ſhort of 'the glory of God.'

You may alſo ſee, that the Apoſtle traces this diſorder to its very ſource.—'Wherefore as by 'one man ſin entered into the world, and death 'by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for 'that all have ſinned.'

I ſhall add but one expreſs ſcripture-teſtimony more.—'And you hath he quickened who were 'dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.'

But, beſides the particular paſſages of ſcripture, poſitively declaring this truth, the whole frame and contexture of the ſcriptures, and all the diſpenſations of divine providence recorded in them, are a proof of the ſame thing. Man is every where conſidered as in a fallen and ſinful ſtate. Every thing that is preſcribed to him, and every thing that is done for him, goes upon that ſuppoſition. It is not one man, or a few men that are in ſcripture called to repentance, but all without exception. Now repentance is only the duty of a ſinner. An innocent perſon cannot repent, he has nothing to grieve for in his heart, or to forſake in his life. It is alſo proper to obſerve, that one of the ſcripture-characters of God is, 'merciful and gracious, ſlow to

'anger, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin.' Now, he could not be to us a forgiving God, and there would be no need that he ſhould be revealed under that character, unleſs we were ſinners that ſtood in need of pardon. Mercy, indeed, is the diſtinguiſhing attribute of God, and this can only have reſpect to offenders. All the other perfections of God might be exerciſed towards pure and holy creatures, but mercy only towards ſinners. He might be a good, holy, juſt, wiſe, powerful God to perſons in a ſtate of innocence, but he can ſhew mercy only to the guilty.

Do not the diſpenſations of God's providence ſhew the ſame thing? He ſent the flood as a teſtimony of the wickedneſs of the world, and for the puniſhment of a guilty race. Remember alſo the ſacrifices which were appointed and accepted by God from the beginning of the world. Sacrifices are for atonement and expiation. They are plainly a ſubſtitution in the room of a forfeited life. It is doing violence to common ſenſe, to make them any thing elſe. The whole Jewiſh œconomy, which had in it ſo many ſacrifices, ſo many offerings, ſo many waſhings and purifications, does plainly ſuppoſe the perſon uſing them to be infected with ſin or moral pollution. Had not this been the caſe, they had been extremely abſurd and improper.

But the ſtrongeſt teſtimony of all that God hath given to the guilt and corruption of mankind,

kind, is his ſending his own Son into the world to redeem them by the ſacrifice of himſelf.—To what purpoſe redeem them if they were not in bondage? Why ſo coſtly an expiation if our lives had not been forfeited to divine juſtice? But that it was for this purpoſe that Chriſt came into the world, is ſo plain from the whole of the ſcriptures, that I ſhall ſelect but one paſſage out of many to prove it.—'Whom God hath ſet 'forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his 'blood, to declare his righteouſneſs, for the re-'miſſion of ſins that are paſt, through the for-'bearance of God.'

What is ſaid already, on this head, is a full proof from ſcripture, that man is now by nature in a ſtate of ſin: that he is alſo, in conſequence of that, in a ſtate of miſery, and liable to the wrath of God, is proved by many of the ſame paſſages, and by many others.—'For the wrath 'of God is revealed from heaven againſt all un-'godlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men, who hold 'the truth in unrighteouſneſs.—For the wages of 'ſin is death, &c.' But I need not multiply paſſages to this purpoſe, for in all God's diſpenſations, the deſerved puniſhment of ſinners is as evident as their ſinfulneſs itſelf. It is, indeed, fully proved from the eſſential perfections of God, particularly his holineſs and juſtice. He is of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity. 'Evil cannot dwell with him, nor fools, that 'is, ſinners, ſtand in his ſight.'

Is not all this then, my brethren, a ſufficient proof from the teſtimony of God, that man in a natural ſtate is ſinful and miſerable? Shall we affirm ourſelves to be whole if he ſaith we are unſound? Do we know more than God? Will we not give credit to the fountain of truth? Nor is it any objection to this, that we ourſelves know it not, or are but little ſenſible of it. One conſiderable part of the diſeaſe is blindneſs of underſtanding; ſo that we may and muſt, till our eyes are opened, be ignorant of our danger. —We may think and ſay that we are rich, and increaſed in goods, and have need of nothing; while we are 'wretched, and miſerable, and blind 'and naked.'

2. The ſame thing appears from the viſible ſtate of the world, and our own experience. Unbelievers are apt to hear with indifference and neglect, what they are told from ſcripture-teſtimony, unleſs otherwiſe confirmed to them: and it is with the unbeliever we have now to do. Beſides, the eſtabliſhment of this truth, upon other evidence than that of ſcripture, ought to have a powerful influence in inducing men to believe the other truths in ſcripture, that are connected with and founded upon it. I think it therefore highly proper to lay before you what evidence we have of our loſt ſtate, from the obſervation of the world, though the ſcriptures had been ſilent. I would likewiſe recommend to all, what ſhall be ſaid on this ſubject, to preſerve your

your faith unſhaken, and keep you from blaſphemous, unbelieving thoughts, if at any time you ſhould be tempted to them: ſince, even unenlightened reaſon confirms the foundation of divine truth, and nature and providence conſpire in preaching the doctrine of divine grace.

Now, doth not our experience, as well as the obſervation of others, ſhew us, that we are born in ſin, and conceived in iniquity? May we not ſay from our own knowledge, that the imaginations of the heart of man are only evil from his youth, and that continually? Is there not a proneneſs and tendency to evil, univerſally to be obſerved in mankind, and a backwardneſs and averſion to that which is good? Is not this apparent even in children, upon the firſt dawn of reaſon in their minds, and the firſt ſight of choice or inclination in their hearts? Surely it muſt be owned, that in that early period, they are at leaſt comparatively innocent.—If any among us is without ſin, it muſt be the youngeſt; 'yet folly is bound in the heart of a child.'—How hard is it to guard them from evil, and to inſpire them with good diſpoſitions, even by the wiſeſt and earlieſt care in their inſtruction! And even after the moſt ſucceſsful pains, are there not ſtill many remaining blemiſhes, through the prevalence of corrupt nature, which ſhew, that the ground-work itſelf was faulty? But, on the contrary, how eaſily do men learn that which is evil? Do they need to be taught? Is it not

enough to give them licence? How juſt is that deſcription in Jeremiah! 'They are wiſe to do 'evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.' I am far from denying, that men are improved and forwarded in ſin, by inſtruction and example, as well as in that which is good: but it is plain, they are far apter ſcholars in the firſt than in the laſt: which plainly ſhews, they are more powerfully diſpoſed to it by nature. Nay, is it not evident, from the univerſal experience and teſtimony of thoſe who act from a principle of religion, that it is extremely difficult, with all the care they can take, to reſiſt the propenſity of nature to the contrary; and that in the beſt, it often gets the ſuperiority, when they are off their guard? Is not this an evidence of the depravity and corruption of human nature, and its tendency to evil? Are thoſe who hate ſin often overcome by it, and ſhall thoſe who love it, preſume to ſay they are free from it?

If any ſhould aſk, how I prove that that courſe of action to which human nature is inclined is evil, without the aſſiſtance of ſcripture? I anſwer, from reaſon; and that many ways—from its pernicious effects on ſocieties, and private perſons; from the teſtimony of the world in general, when others than themſelves are concerned, and from the teſtimony of every man's conſcience, in his own caſe. Who is there, that does not often feel in himſelf a powerful tendency to what he cannot but in his heart condemn?

demn? Is not his conſcience, God's vicegerent? and doth not natural religion, as well as the religion of Chriſt, declare him corrupt? So that I may ſay with the Apoſtle Paul, not citing the paſſage as a proof, but as an illuſtration and deſcription of the character and ſtate of natural men—'For when the Gentiles which have not 'the law, do by nature the things contained in 'the law: theſe having not the law, are a law 'unto themſelves, which ſhew the work of the 'law written in their hearts, their conſcience al-'ſo bearing witneſs, and their thoughts, the 'mean while, accuſing or elſe excuſing one 'another.'

Thus there is as much light remaining with us ſince the fall, as to ſhew, that we are out of the way, but not to bring us back to it again.

As a ſerious conſideration of the ſtate of the wicked may ſhew us our natural impurity, ſo it hath been long ago diſcovered, and confeſſed by many of the ancient Heathens, who never heard of the name of Chriſt, nor knew of the remedy. Theſe, diſcerning by nature the perfectly pure and holy nature of God, and comparing it with the diſpoſitions prevalent in man, could not reconcile them together: but concluded, that a creature ſo corrupt could not come in that condition out of the hands of its Creator. This difficulty ſome of them endeavoured to ſolve by a ſtate of pre-exiſtence, which bears ſome reſemblance to the true ſolution given of it in the ho-

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ly ſcripture, viz. the apoſtacy of our firſt parents, which entailed a corrupted nature upon their poſterity, in which the light of nature and revealed truth ſeem almoſt wholly to coincide.

It is to the ſame thing that I cannot help attributing the practice that ſo univerſally prevailed over the Heathen world, before the coming of Chriſt, of offering ſacrifices, to appeaſe the wrath of the deity ſuppoſed to be offended. That the cuſtom of ſacrificing prevailed very generally, perhaps univerſally among the Heathen nations, at the greateſt diſtance from, and having no correſpondence with each other, is a certain and unqueſtionable fact. Neither do I ſee to what cauſe we can aſcribe it, unleſs to one of theſe two; either an ancient tradition from the beginning of the world, and ſpread with the inhabitants through the ſeveral parts of it, as they ſeparated and peopled it, or to the common condition of human nature, which dictated the ſame thing to perſons in ſuch diſtant places.

If the firſt of theſe ſuppoſitions is embraced, which indeed I ſuppoſe to be the truth, it appears, that ſacrifices were appointed by God to man in his fallen ſtate, for the pardon of ſin, and that they had reference to the great propitiatory ſacrifice of Chriſt upon the croſs.

If we prefer the laſt ſuppoſition, it would ſeem as if the conſciouſneſs of guilt had uniformly prompted men in all ages and nations to offer up ſome atonement for their offences. In both

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caſes, it equally ſerves to prove the corruption and ſinfulneſs of human nature.

Now, as what hath been ſaid plainly proves the impurity of man in his natural ſtate, ſo his miſery and liableneſs to puniſhment may alſo be proved, both as a natural conſequence of his ſinfulneſs, and even more plainly by itſelf. There is not only a conſiderable degree of actual miſery in the world, but plain preſages of more to follow it in the world to come. Need I take up much time in enumerating the ſeveral miſeries and calamities incident to human life? Are not oppreſſion and injury from one another, poverty, ſickneſs, pain and death, the plain fruits of ſin, and viſible tokens of God's diſpleaſure? Man, with ſome marks of ſuperiority and excellence of nature, is even, by means of his ſuperiority, his knowledge, and foreſight of his own ſufferings, more miſerable than any other of the creatures that is equally ſubject to the ſtroke of death.

To the whole, I ſhall only ſubjoin one conſideration more, which is applicable to both parts of the argument—I have often thought, that the 'natural terror and fear with which 'men are poſſeſſed, of the preſence of God, or 'any remarkable token of his power, is nothing 'elſe but an indication of guilt, or an apprehen-'ſion of wrath.'

You may ſee ſome incidents in ſcripture, from which it is natural to conclude, that when God makes

SERMON III.

An Inducement to come to Chriſt.

Rev. iii. 17.

Becauſe thou ſayeſt, I am rich, and increaſed with goods, and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

HAVING, in a former diſcourſe, proved and illuſtrated this truth, that all mankind are by nature in a ſtate of ſin and miſery, under the bondage of corruption, and liable to the wrath of God:—I proceed now to the ſecond thing propoſed, which was to ſhew you, that being brought to a lively ſenſe and genuine conviction of this, is the firſt, and a neceſſary ſtep to the ſaving knowledge of God in Chriſt.

On this I ſhall not need to ſpend much time, as it is ſo exceedingly plain, both in itſelf, and from what hath been already ſaid.—It is, however,

ever, neceſſary to ſet it clearly before you, in order to lay a foundation for the improvement of the ſubject.

If the doctrine of Chriſt, and of him crucified, proceeds upon the ſuppoſition of our ſinful and miſerable condition by nature, then ſurely it can neither be valued, embraced, nor improved; and indeed, I think hardly underſtood, by thoſe who know not this their natural ſtate. What Chriſt hath done, and promiſes to do in our behalf, is deſigned as a remedy for our diſtreſſed condition; and therefore, till the diſtreſs is known, the remedy will be ſet at nought. If a phyſician ſhould offer his care and ſkill for the recovery of a man, who eſteemed himſelf in perfect health, would he not deride the propoſal, ſo long as he continued in that opinion? If any man ſhould offer a charitable ſupply of clothes and food to one, who imagined himſelf immenſely rich, and gloried in his riches, would he not look upon it as the groſſeſt inſult?

Juſt ſo is the goſpel treated by all ſuch as ſee not their miſery. What is the ſubſtance of the goſpel? 'To you, O men, I call, and my voice 'is to the ſons of men. Behold! I preach to you 'Chriſt crucified, a Saviour, ſuited to your ne-'ceſſities, able to ſave to the uttermoſt, all that 'come to God through him. He is well fitted 'to be a Mediator between you and your offen-'ded maker. He hath offered himſelf up, a 'ſacrifice to the juſtice of God, for your ſins, by

'the merit of which, you may be ſaved from 'deſerved and impending ruin. He offers him-'ſelf as a guide, to direct your feet in the way 'of peace—to ſtand by you in the difficulties 'and dangers to which you are expoſed, and to 'give you, by his communicated ſtrength, a 'complete victory over all your enemies.'

What reply doth the unconvinced ſinner make to all this? Why he ſaith, 'I know 'nothing of this miſery you ſuppoſe; wherefore 'then a Saviour? I ſee no ſin; what neceſſity 'then for an atonement? I fear no wrath; 'therefore will ſeek for no interceſſor. My 'eyes are open, therefore I will have no guide. 'I know of no enemies, and therefore will not 'enter into contention with a ſhadow, or flee 'when no man purſueth.'

Theſe, my brethren, are either directly or implicitly the thoughts of men, in a ſecure and unconvinced ſtate; and while they are ſo, they can ſee no form nor comelineſs in the Saviour, nor any beauty that they ſhould deſire him.

It is otherwiſe with the broken in ſpirit. He ſees his own vileneſs and unworthineſs, and therefore cannot lift his eyes to God, but through the atoning blood of Chriſt. He fears the avenger of blood, and therefore flies to the 'city of refuge'—The meſſage of the goſpel is to him indeed glad tidings of great joy, and he counts it a faithful ſaying, and 'worthy of all 'acceptation.'

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The juſtice of this repreſentation you may ſee from what our Saviour himſelf ſays, of the end of his coming: 'They that be whole need not a 'phyſician, but they that are ſick: But go ye 'and learn what that meaneth, I will have mer-'cy and not ſacrifice; for I am not come to call 'the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.'

See alſo the terms of his invitation. 'Come 'unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, 'and I will give you reſt.'

Appetite and knowledge of neceſſity is firſt required, or ſuppoſed to the beſtowing of goſpel bleſſings. 'Ho! every one that thirſteth, come 'ye to the waters.'

I ſhall only add, that we find by the inſtances recorded in ſcripture, of ſuch as were converted by the preaching of the goſpel, that their converſion 'took its riſe from conviction of ſin.—'Now 'when they heard this, they were pricked in 'their hearts, and ſaid unto Peter, and to the 'reſt of the apoſtles, Men and brethren, what 'ſhall we do?' See alſo the inſtance of the jailor —'Then he called for a light, and ſprang in, 'and came trembling, and fell down before 'Paul and Silas: and brought them out, and 'ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?'

Repentance unto life, and the return of the ſinner to God, proceeds from the ſame cauſe in every age. Who are the perſons who believingly apply to Chriſt for the pardon of their ſins, but thoſe who ſee they are undone without him?

Who are the perſons in whoſe eyes he is moſt precious, and who maintain the moſt habitual dependence upon him? Are they not thoſe who have been moſt effectually humbled, and ſee their own inſufficiency for any thing that is good?

From all this I conclude, that none can come to Chriſt by faith, but thoſe who ſee themſelves to be 'wretched, and miſerable, and blind, and 'naked.'

Let us now make ſome improvement of what hath been ſaid upon this ſubject for your inſtruction and direction.

1. I would improve what has been ſaid on this ſubject, for diſcovering the danger of many among us who have never yet been brought to a juſt ſenſe of their character and ſtate. Even the general belief that ſuch often have in the ſcriptures, may ſhew them what they have to fear. I might, no doubt, firſt of all obſerve, how very guilty and miſerable thoſe are, who are moſt notorious for ſins of the groſſeſt and moſt ſhameful kind. But my ſubject leads me more directly to conſider who are in general unrenewed, than to mark the ſeveral degrees of guilt in particular ſinners. From the text, therefore, and the illuſtration of it, I am authoriſed to declare to you, and 'I beſeech you to hear it with application,' that all ſuch as were never brought to a real diſcovery and inward ſenſe of their miſerable condition by nature, are ſtill in a ſtate of wrath, and ſtrangers to the power of religion, whatever may

be

be their profeſſion, and whatever may be their preſent peace. Oh! how eaſy is it to lay aſleep a natural conſcience, and to keep a deceitful corrupt heart in a ſtate of eaſe and ſecurity? Some formality in outward duty, ſome moderation in ſin, ſo to ſpeak, the natural decay and weakneſs of human paſſions or youthful luſts, in a character formed by human prudence, and regulated by health, credit or gain, is often made to ſupply the place of a heart renewed by the ſpirit and grace of God. But conſider, I beſeech you, that though ſome may be ten-fold more the children of the devil than others, yet all by nature are the ſervants of ſin; and 'except a man be 'born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of 'God.'—It is not only ſuch as are prophane or unclean: ſuch as riot in brutiſh ſenſuality; ſuch as are the plagues of human ſociety; who live in brawls and contention, but all in whom an eſſential change has never been wrought, that are thus included under condemnation.

It is uſual for men to take encouragement, from ſeeing others worſe than themſelves; and to conſider all the threatenings in ſcripture, as levelled againſt the chief and capital offenders; but my text is chiefly directed to ſuch as ſay they are 'rich, and increaſed with goods.' Can you ſay then, my brethren, that you have been brought under genuine convictions of ſin? Have you been obliged to fall down proſtrate before God, when ſitting upon the throne of his holi-

neſs? Have you found the ſentence of death in yourſelves, and diſcovered no remedy but in Chriſt? If this has never been your caſe, you have reaſon to fear, that you are yet 'in the gall 'of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity.'

But I muſt tell you alſo, that this is matter of feeling, more than of profeſſion. It is not enough to ſpeak honourably of Chriſt or of his works. Many do ſo, who never felt their neceſſity, or ſeriouſly and in good earneſt applied to him. It were a happy thing, if all among our hearers, who call for evangelical preaching, who quarrel with us when they think we do not preach the Saviour's croſs, the loſt ſtate of man, and the doctrine of free grace, were experimentally acquainted with theſe truths. Many ſuch have only been accuſtomed to hear the Redeemer ſpoken of with reverence. They may be able to imitate the language of ſome of his ſervants, though they know very little of that brokenneſs of ſpirit which accompanies true repentance.

But leſt this ſhould be in any meaſure miſtaken, I muſt make theſe two obſervations:—The firſt is, that a lively ſenſe, and deep conviction of ſin, is, properly ſpeaking, but a negative mark of true religion; giving us to know, that the unhumbled are yet impenitent.—For it is certain, that many have been under very ſtrong convictions, nay, have been driven to the very borders of deſpair with terror, who yet never were effectually changed, but ſtifled their convictions

and

and returned to their former ſecurity of heart, and careleſſneſs of life.

'Secondly,' there may be ſome, on the other hand, who are truly 'born of God,' in whom, the terrors of conviction have not been very remarkable. This happens moſt frequently in the caſe of thoſe, who are called in their infancy, or earlier years, and who have had the advantage of a careful and pious education. It would be deſtructive of the comforts of God's children, to lay down 'one method' in which he always proceeds. He is free and ſovereign in the manner of his dealing with ſinners; and ſoftens ſome hearts by kindneſs, as well as others by correction. So that if the end be brought about, we need be leſs ſolicitous about the ſteps of his procedure. Yet I think humility of ſpirit is inſeparable from real religion; and if it be leſs viſible in the anguiſh of repentance, it will be ſtill manifeſt in the temper of the penitent.

II. Let me now, for the improvement of this ſubject, lay down a few of the beſt and moſt ſolid evidences of genuine conviction of ſin. And,

1. It is a good ſign that conviction is genuine, when there is a clear and deep apprehenſion of the evil of ſin, as well as the danger of it. When the mind dwells, not only on the atrocity of particular crimes, but on the aggravation of all ſin, as ſuch: when the ſinner is truly offended

ded with himſelf, for departing from his maker's ſervice; breaking his holy laws; forgetting or deſpiſing his innumerable mercies; there may be and there is often an apprehenſion of ſuffering, when there is little ſenſe of the evil of ſin; but the conviction is then genuine, when it makes the ſinner not only remember what he has done, 'but confeſs what he has deſerved.'

2. It is a good evidence, when the ſenſe of the evil of ſin abides and grows, even though the fear of wrath may in a great meaſure have abated.

It is obſervable, that conviction of ſin uſually takes its riſe from ſome groſs or heinous acts, which firſt alarm the conſcience; and in ſuch a ſituation, the attention of the penitent is fixed on nothing elſe, but the enormities of his life. If this view continues, and produces its effects, he is ſoon brought to ſee and confeſs the inherent vanity of his heart; the worldlineſs of his affections; and the unprofitableneſs of his converſation. It is a very common thing, for perſons who ſeem to have ſome ſenſe of the commiſſion of crimes, to have little or no ſenſe at all of the neglect of duty, and of living daily to themſelves. It was a heavy charge, however, brought by the Prophet againſt Belſhazzar:—'And the God in 'whoſe hand thy breath is, and whoſe are all thy 'ways, haſt thou not glorified.' Wherever there is true repentance, though there may be the greateſt peace of mind, there will be alſo a deep and

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growing ſenſe of the evil of ſin, and the obligation of being habitually devoted to God.

3. It is a good evidence, when there is a continued and growing eſteem of the neceſſity and value of the mediation of Chriſt.—It was to ſave ſinners that he came. A ſenſe of ſin is neceſſary to our receiving him; and in proportion to its ſtrength, will certainly be our attachment to him. This indeed is the great and vital principle of the ſpiritual life.—'I am crucified with Chriſt, nevertheleſs I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in 'me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh 'I live by the faith of the Son of God; who 'loved me, and gave himſelf to die for me.'

4. The beſt and ſureſt mark of real conviction of ſin, is, if it leaves you poſſeſſed in a deep hatred and abhorrence of it, and a daily ſolicitude to fly from it. Some may counterfeit a ſenſe of the evil of ſin, to their own hearts; may have a real fear of its bitter conſequences; and even a preſumptuous reliance on Chriſt for pardon; and yet may in ſome inſtances adhere to the practice of it.

Floods of tears from ſuch a perſon avail nothing; but he hath certainly truly ſorrowed for ſin, who in his practice forſakes it:—that is to ſay, he is not willingly ſubject to any known ſin, but ſays with Elihu, 'That which I ſee not teach 'thou me. If I have done iniquity, I will do no 'more.

III.

III. Let me beſeech all ſerious perſons to improve this ſubject for the trial of their ſtate. Examine, by the principles above laid down, the reality and the progreſs of religion in your ſouls. Have you a growing ſenſe of the evil of ſin, and of your own unworthineſs?—This is at once an evidence, and a mean of growth in grace. He that thinks leaſt of himſelf, is higheſt in God's account; and the more a believer increaſes in holineſs and real worth, the more he increaſes in humility. As it is an evidence, it is alſo a mean of further improvement; for he that hath the deepeſt ſenſe of his unworthineſs and weakneſs, will certainly live moſt by faith, in the merit and grace of his Redeemer.

Therefore, Chriſtians, try yourſelves by this important ſign: Whether do you, by religious duties, build yourſelves up on ſelf-righteouſneſs, or do you only learn by them, how far you fall ſhort of what is incumbent on you? What innumerable evils compaſs you about; and therefore, how much have you need of mercy inſtead of reward? Do you look upon the works of righteouſneſs which you have done, as ſomething, by which you merit at the hand of God; or do you look upon them as the evidence of his own work in you, and for you, and give him the glory, to whom it is due?

IV. I ſhall now conclude the whole, with a

few directions for producing and preſerving this profitable ſenſe and conviction of ſin. And,

1. Let me beg of every hearer the ſerious conſideration of himſelf and his ways. Many have no ſenſe of their ſinfulneſs, becauſe they have no knowledge of themſelves at all; but go through the world, in uninterrupted thoughtleſſneſs and unconcern. Is there any thing of greater moment than the ſtate of your minds, and your hope towards God? Inattention is perhaps a more univerſal cauſe of impiety, than high-handed and obſtinate profanity. Would you but ſeriouſly conſider your ways, and lay to heart the things that belong to your peace, I would count it a hopeful circumſtance; and expect you would ſpeedily ſee your danger, and God in his mercy would lead you to the cure.

2. Give yourſelves much to reading and hearing the word of God. The entrance of his word giveth light —It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and correction; but it is particularly neceſſary for conviction; for by the law is the knowledge of ſin. What wonder, if thoſe who never open a Bible, and ſeldom enter into the houſe of God, ſhould be ignorant of their guilt and miſery! The word of God ſhews his right in you, pleads his cauſe, and challenges your apoſtacy. It is exceedingly rare that thoſe who have fairly turned their backs upon God's inſtituted worſhip, are diſturbed in their ſecurity; but are ſuffered

ſuffered to ſleep on, till they ſleep the ſleep of death. But it frequently happens, that thoſe who attend ordinances, even from no higher principle than curioſity, cuſtom or form, find, that the word of God is 'a fire and hammer' that breaketh the rock in pieces; 'that it is quick 'and powerful, ſharper than any two-edged 'ſword, piercing, even to the dividing aſunder of 'ſoul and ſpirit, joints and marrow, and is a 'diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the 'heart.'

3. In the laſt place, let me beſeech you often to ſeat yourſelves in the immediate preſence of God, or rather, frequently to recollect, that you can no where go from his Spirit, or fly from his preſence. There is, if I may ſpeak ſo, a light and glory in the preſence of God, that diſcerns and diſcloſes the works of darkneſs. We may often excuſe or palliate our conduct to men, and even hide its deformity from our own view, when we could not juſtify it to ourſelves, if we reflected, that 'it is open and manifeſt in the ſight of 'God.'—If, therefore, there is any thing in your practice, which you are inclined to palliate and apt to excuſe,—ſuppoſe you were ſtanding at the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, where all of us ſhall ſhortly be; and think, whether your excuſes will then ſtand the teſt of his impartial ſearch.

If our hearts condemn us not, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things. It is therefore the duty and intereſt of every ſinner,

to

to take ſhame and confuſion of face to himſelf, and apply to the 'blood of ſprinkling 'which ſpeaketh better things than the blood of 'Abel.'

SERMON

SERMON IV.

On the Purity of The Heart.

PROVERBS XXX. 7. 9.

Two things have I required of thee, deny me them not before I die: Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord? Or leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.

MY BRETHREN,

OUR dependent condition as creatures, and much more our dangerous condition as ſinners, expoſed to daily temptation, renders prayer a duty of the moſt abſolute neceſſity. You muſt all be ſenſible, how frequent and preſſing the exhortations to it are in the Holy Scriptures. And, indeed, there cannot be a better evidence of

of a right temper of mind, than an habitual diſpoſition to the exerciſe of this duty.

But as prayer is a neceſſary duty, we ought to give the greater attention to the manner in which it is performed. We ought to aſk only for ſuch things as are truly ſafe and uſeful. We ought alſo to offer up our prayers with importunity, or reſerve, according to the nature and comparative importance of thoſe bleſſings we deſire to obtain. All our wants are perfectly known to God; he is alſo the beſt judge of what is fit for us, and therefore, our petitions ſhould be well weighed, and expreſſed in ſuch terms, as, at the ſame time that they intimate our deſires, leave much to himſelf, as to the meaſure and manner of ſatisfying them.

We have an excellent example of this pious and prudent conduct, in the prayer of the prophet Agur, juſt read in your hearing. All his requeſts are ſummed up in two general heads. Theſe he ſeems to inſiſt upon, as abſolutely neceſſary to aſk, with that humble, holy confidence, which is founded on the divine promiſe, that if we aſk any thing agreeable to his will, he heareth us. He ſeems alſo to aſk them, as what would fully ſatisfy him, and be ſufficient for the comfort of the preſent life, and the happineſs of the life to come. 'Two things,' ſays he, 'have 'I required of thee, deny me them not before,' or, as it ought rather to be tranſlated, 'until 'I die.'

Theſe two requeſts are conceived in the following terms: 'Remove far from me vanity and 'lies, give me neither poverty nor riches.' The firſt, viz. 'Remove far from me vanity and 'lies,' evidently relates to the temper of his mind, and the ſtate of his ſoul. The ſecond, viz. 'Give me neither poverty nor riches, relates to his outward condition, or circumſtances in the preſent life. There are two things in the general ſtructure of this comprehenſive prayer, that merit your particular attention. Firſt, The order of his requeſt; beginning with what is of moſt importance, the temper of his mind, and his hope towards God; and then adding, as but deſerving the ſecond place, what related to his preſent accommodation.

Secondly, The connection of his requeſts The choice he makes as to his temporal condition, is in immediate and direct ſubſerviency to his ſanctification. This is plain from the arguments with which he preſſes, or the reaſons which he aſſigns for his ſecond petition. 'Give 'me neither poverty nor riches, leſt I be full 'and deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord? Or 'leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of 'my God in vain.'

My brethren, I am perſuaded that this ſubject can hardly be, at any time, unſeaſonable to a Chriſtian aſſembly, as our miſplaced, exceſſive, and unreaſonable deſires, are the greateſt enemies to our progreſs in holineſs, as well as to our

our comfort and peace. Perhaps, however, there are ſome circumſtances that render it peculiarly proper for this auditory. Young perſons are very apt to cheriſh vaſt and boundleſs deſires as to outward things; and having not yet experienced the deceitfulneſs of the world, are apt to entertain exceſſive and extravagant hopes. The truth is, rich and poor, young and old, may here receive a leſſon of the utmoſt moment.

Let me therefore intreat your attention, while I endeavour to open and improve this paſſage of the Holy Scriptures; beginning, at this time, with the firſt requeſt, 'Remove far from me 'vanity and lies.'

In diſcourſing on which, I will endeavour,

I. To explain the import of it, or ſhew at what it chiefly points, and to what it may be ſuppoſed to extend.

II. Apply the ſubject for your inſtruction and direction.

I. I am to explain the import of the prophet's prayer, or ſhew at what it chiefly points, and to what it may be ſuppoſed to extend, in the petition, 'Remove far from me vanity and lies.' The word vanity, eſpecially when it is joined, as it is frequently in Scripture, with 'lying, or lies,' is of a very large and comprehenſive ſignification. The word in the original, tranſlated 'vanity,'

properly ſignifies 'lightneſs' or 'emptineſs;' and lies ſignify 'falſehood,' in oppoſition to 'truth.'

I imagine we ſhall have a clear conception, both of the meaning and force of this phraſe, if we make the following remark: God himſelf is the great fountain of life and exiſtence: the great I AM, as he emphatically ſtyles himſelf to Moſes; the 'Original' and the 'only reality,' if I may ſo ſpeak. All other beings have only a dependent and precarious exiſtence; ſo that the creation itſelf, though his own work, compared to him, is vanity. 'Vanity of vanities, ſaith the 'preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.' Therefore, in a particular manner, the word is often uſed to denote the folly of all idolatrous worſhip; or the giving the reſpect and honour to any thing elſe, which is due to God alone. 'They have moved me to jealouſy with that 'which is not God, they have provoked me to 'anger with their vanities. Are there any a-'mong the vanities of the Gentiles that can cauſe 'rain; or can the heavens give ſhowers, art thou 'not he, O Lord our God?'

Sometimes it is uſed to denote the 'folly or 'unprofitableneſs' of any vice, and particularly of an ill founded conceit of ourſelves, as well as of all fraud and diſſimulation, in word or action. So that this prayer for our ſouls, ſhort as it appears to be, when conſidered in its full extent, will be found to contain a great variety of important matter.—This I ſhall endeavour to give you

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a brief account of, under the following particulars.

1. We are hereby taught to pray, that we may be preſerved by divine grace, from all falſe and erroneous principles in religion; ſo as we may neither be deceived by them ourſelves, nor any way inſtrumental in deceiving others. This, by what has been ſaid of the uſe of the words in Scripture, appears to be implied in the requeſt, and it is of more moment than ſome are willing to allow. The underſtanding being the leading faculty, an error there ſpreads its unhappy influence through the whole temper and life. Whereas, on the contrary, light in the mind produces fidelity and ſecurity in the conſcience, and tenderneſs in the converſation. You may obſerve, that through the whole hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, idolatry, or a departure from the knowledge and worſhip of the true God, is the leading ſin, and the fruitful ſource of every other vicious practice. We ſometimes, indeed, ſeem to ſtand aſtoniſhed at the exceſſive proneneſs of the ancient Jews to this ſin. But we need only a little reflection to diſcover, that an evil heart of unbelief continues the ſame at bottom, and daily produces the like dangerous effects. How prone have men been in all ages to depart from the ſimplicity of the truth! In how many different ſhapes have they perverted it! One age, or one country, has been polluted by one error; and another by an oppoſite; impelled by the unſtable

ſtable and irregular fancies of men of corrupt minds. In the laſt age, the great theme of the carnal reaſoner was, to attempt to expoſe the Scripture-Doctrine of God's certain knowledge, and preciſe ordination of all events; and in this, fate and neceſſity, have become the ſtrong hold of infidelity, and are embraced, or ſeem to be embraced, by every enemy of true religion without exception. Error, ſhifting its ground, indeed, is but natural; for lying vanities are innumerable; but the true God is the ſame 'yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.

At this very time, how abounding and prevalent is infidelity, calling in queſtion the moſt important and fundamental principles both of natural and revealed religion! And how properly is this deſcribed, by the expreſſion in the text, 'vanity and lies;' for it always takes its riſe from the pride and vanity of the human heart! Sometimes a pride of underſtanding, which aſpires to paſs judgment on things far above its reach, and condemn things long before they are examined and underſtood: Sometimes alſo, from a pride of heart, or ſelf-ſufficiency, that is unable to endure the humbling and mortifying view given us in Scripture of our character and ſtate. Oh how readily do men turn aſide from the truth! With what greedineſs do they drink in the flattering but deſtructive poiſon! Need I point out to you the fatal effects of ſuch principles taking place? It looſens the obligations to obedience, takes off the

the edge of the reproofs of conſcience, and thus removing reſtraints, leaves men, in the emphatical language of the Holy Scriptures, 'to walk in 'the ways of their own hearts, and in the ſight of 'their own eyes.'

But in this requeſt, 'remove far from me vani-'ty and lies,' I would not have you confine your views to the moſt groſs infidelity and avowed oppoſition to God. Pray alſo, that you may be preſerved from error, or miſtake of any kind; but eſpecially ſuch as have the greateſt influence on the ſubſtance of religion.

A clear apprehenſion of the holy nature, and righteous government of God—the infinite evil of ſin—the foundation of our peace in the blood of the atonement—and the renewing of our natures by the Holy Ghoſt, ſeem to me abſolutely neceſſary to true and undefiled religion. And they are the truths which particularly ſerve to exalt the Creator, and lay the creature in the duſt. When, therefore, we conſider how grateful to corrupt nature every thing is, that tends to foſter pride, to create ſecurity, and ſet the mind at eaſe in the indulgence of ſin; we muſt be ſenſible of how great importance it is, to pray for divine direction and divine preſervation. Nothing is more dangerous to men than confidence and preſumption; nothing more uſeful, in faith and practice, than humility and ſelf-denial.

2. This prayer implies, a deſire that we may be preſerved from ſetting our affections on ſuch objects

objects as are but vain and unſatisfying, and will in the end, diſappoint our expectation. I take this to be not only a part, but a very important part of the Prophet's meaning. The world is the great ſource of temptation; the powerful and unhappy influence of which we may daily ſee; or rather, all of us daily and ſenſibly feel. What is it poſſeſſes the fancy, miſleads the judgment, inflames the affections, conſumes the time, and ruins the ſoul, but theſe preſent enjoyments, of which the wiſeſt of men, after a full trial of them, have left us their character, 'vanity of 'vanities.'

I am ſenſible that I have now entered upon a ſubject, which is far from being difficult to enlarge upon, and yet, perhaps, very difficult to treat with propriety, or in ſuch a manner as to have the intended effect. There is nothing more eaſy than, in a bold declamatory way, to draw pictures of the vanity of human life. It hath been done by thouſands, when, after all their broken ſchemes and diſappointed views, they have juſt ſuffered ſhipwreck upon the coaſt of the enchanted land of hope. But from ſuch men we may expect to hear the language of deſpair, rather than of experience; and as it is too late for the inſtruction of the ſufferers, ſo it very rarely has any effect in warning others to avoid the danger. What I would, therefore, willingly attempt is, to conſider this matter in a ſober ſcriptural light; if ſo be, that it may pleaſe God to carry conviction

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to our hearts, and make it truly useful, both to speaker and hearers.

Let me, therefore, my brethren, point out to you precisely, wherein the vanity of the world lieth. The world, in itself, is the workmanship of God, and every thing that is done in it, is by the ordination or permission of God. As such it is good, and may be used in subserviency to his honour, and our own peace. But through the corruption of our nature, the creature becomes the rival and competitor of the Creator for our hearts.—When we place our supreme happiness upon it, instead of making it a mean of leading us to God, then its inherent vanity immediately appears.—When men allow themselves in the indulgence of vicious pleasures, how justly may they be called 'vanity and lies!' They are smiling and inviting to appearance, but how dreadful and destructive in their effects! 'Whoredom and 'wine, and new wine taketh away the heart.' Those who refuse to be confined by the laws of piety and sobriety, vainly think they are walking at liberty, when they are bringing themselves into subjection to the severest and most inflexible of all masters. Read the just and striking description, by Solomon, of the effects of whoredom; and reflect on the innumerable calamities brought, in every age, on persons and families by unbridled lust. See also the effects of intemperance and excess—'Wine is a mocker, strong drink is rag-'ing, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not

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'wife.' And again: 'The drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty. Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; at last, it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.'

Think on the unhappy consequences of dishonesty and fraud. 'Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel.'—You may also see, in innumerable passages of Scripture, that oppression of others, as it is a sin of the deepest dye, so it is often remarkably overtaken, and punished in the course of providence, even in the present life. 'Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways; for the froward is abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just.'

But there is something more in this request, than being preserved from practises directly vicious; for the setting of our hearts upon worldly things, and making them our chief portion and delight, is certainly seeking after 'vanity and lies.' They are far from affording that happiness and peace which we demand of them, and expect from them. 'A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.' Can there be any thing more comfortable to experience, than that strong expression, 'Thou pre-

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'pareſt a table for me in the preſence of mine 'enemies, thou anointeſt my head with oil, my 'cup runneth over.' You may alſo find in the word of god, many warnings of the folly of thoſe who travel in the path of ambition, and put their truſt in man. 'Surely men of low degree are 'vanity, and men of high degree are a lie. Put 'not your truſt in princes, nor in the ſon of man, 'in whom there is no help. Happy is he that 'hath the God of Jacob for his help, whoſe 'hope is in the Lord his God.' But the moſt comprehenſive remark of all, upon this ſubject, is, that human life itſelf is ſo exceedingly precarious, that it muſt write 'vanity and emptineſs' on every thing, the poſſeſſion and uſe of which is confined to the preſent ſtate. 'Behold thou haſt 'made my days as an hand-breadth.' What a ſtriking picture does our Lord draw of the vanity of human happineſs, in that parable of the ground of the rich man, which brought forth plentifully! 'And he thought within himſelf, ſaying, what 'ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where to be-'ſtow my fruits?' And while this man is ſedulouſly employed in making proviſion for a long and happy life, 'God ſaid unto him, thou fool, 'this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee, 'then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou 'haſt provided?'

The whole of the preceding repreſentation may be ſummed up in this excellent ſentence of the wiſe man: 'The wicked worketh a deceitful

'work; but to him that ſoweth righteouſly ſhall 'be a ſure reward.'

Now, my brethren, need I add, how prone we are to be led aſtray, in a greater or leſs degree, by ſuch 'vanity and lies?' I do not inſiſt upon the many victims, which, in every age, have been ſeen to fall by the deſtructive hand of vice. How many have been ruined by luſt, ſlain by intemperance, or beggared by diſhoneſty! But I intreat you particularly to obſerve, that when we ſet our affections immoderately upon any earthly object or enjoyment, or when they are not truly ſanctified; how much they diſappoint our expectation in poſſeſſion, and what ſcenes of diſtreſs we prepare for ourſelves by their removal.

3. This requeſt, 'Remove far from me vanity 'and lies,' implies, that God would graciouſly preſerve us from deceiving ourſelves, and thinking our character better, and our ſtate ſafer than it really is. When we take a view of the ſtate of the world, and the conduct of thoſe who have not yet caſt off all belief of eternity, and a judgment to come, it is impoſſible to account for their ſecurity, but by a great degree of ſelf-deceit. We may ſay of them with the prophet Iſaiah, 'He feed-'eth on aſhes, a deceived heart hath turned him a-'ſide, that he cannot deliver his ſoul, nor ſay, 'Is there not a lie in my right hand?' And from the repreſentation given by our Saviour, it is plain that many ſhall continue in their miſtake, and only be undeceived at the laſt day. 'Not,

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'every one that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, 'shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' How awful a reflection this! How dreadful a disappointment to discover our misery only when there is no more hope of escaping it! Is there not a possibility of this being the case with many of you, my brethren; and do you not tremble at the thought? I would not wish any, in general, to give way to a spirit of bondage, or slavish fear; but the best of the children of God have often discovered this holy jealousy of themselves. 'Who 'can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me 'from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also 'from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me, then shall I be upright, and I 'shall be innocent from the great transgression.' And again: 'Search me, O God, and know my 'heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and 'see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead 'me in the way everlasting.'

This leads me naturally to add upon this subject, that we ought to pray for preservation from self-deceit, as to particular branches of our character and conduct, as well as our general state.—Many, even upon the whole, good men, are occasionally and insensibly brought, for a season, under the direction of sinful passions. They may be indulging themselves without suspicion, in what is, notwithstanding, really provoking to God, injurious or offensive to others, and, in the issue, hurtful to their own peace. They may be making an enjoy-

ment, a talent, a relation, an idol, when they think they are keeping within the bounds of duty. They may be indulging a ſinful reſentment, when they think they are promoting the glory of God. Many an excuſe for neglecting commanded duty, from prudence or difficulty, ſatisfies ourſelves, which will not ſtand in the day of trial. What reaſon for the Prophet's prayer in the ſenſe juſt now aſſigned, 'Remove far from me vanity and 'lies.'

4. In the next place, this requeſt implies a deſire to be preſerved from pride and ſelf-conceit, upon any ſubject. There is not any thing that affords a ſtronger evidence of our being unacquainted with ourſelves and our own ſtate, than that propenſity to pride and vanity, which is ſo common to us all. It is thought by many, that pride was the ſin of the angels, that caſt them down to hell. It is plain, that pride was the main ingredient in the firſt ſin of man. And perhaps it is a juſt and proper deſcription of all ſin as ſuch, that it is a dethroning of God, and ſetting up ſelf to be loved, honoured and ſerved in his room. This ſin is by no means confined to the worſt of men, in whom it hath an abſolute dominion; but retains and diſcovers an unhappy influence in the very beſt.—Every thing may be the fuel of pride; our perſons, our performances, our relations, our poſſeſſions; nay, ſo pliable, and at the ſame time ſo prepoſterous is this diſpoſition, that men are found ſometimes proud of their very vices and defects

defects. But how ill do pride and vanity ſuit ſuch poor mortals as we are, who ſeem born but to die!—Who, after paſſing through a longer or ſhorter ſeries of weakneſſes, diſappointments and troubles, muſt at laſt be laid in the ſilent grave, to moulder in the duſt. We are dependent creatures, who have nothing, and can have nothing but what we receive from the unmerited favour of God. We are unwiſe and ignorant creatures, who know nothing to the bottom, and therefore are liable to continual miſtakes in our conduct. Thoſe among us, who have the greateſt comprehenſion of mind, and know moſt; as it ſerves to ſhew the comparative ignorance of the bulk of mankind, ſo it ſerves to convince themſelves how little they do know, and how little they can know after all, compared with what is to them unſearchable.

But, above all, we are ſinful creatures, who have rendered ourſelves, by our guilt, the juſt objects of divine diſpleaſure. Is there any who dares to plead exemption from this character? And do pride and vanity become thoſe to whom they manifeſtly belong? Can any thing be more fooliſh than indulging ſuch diſpoſitions? There is a very juſt expreſſion of one of the apocryphal writers: 'Pride was not made for man, nor a high look 'for him that is born of a woman.' Indeed they are ſo evidently unſuitable to our ſtate and circumſtances, that one would think we ſhould need no higher principle than our own reaſon and ob-

ſervation to keep us free from them. We do however, need the moſt earneſt and aſſiduous addreſſes to the throne of grace, to have all pride and vanity removed from us.—How hateful is pride to God! We are told, 'he reſiſteth the 'proud.' On the contrary, no diſpoſition is more amiable in his ſight than humility. 'He giveth 'grace to the humble.' And again: 'To this 'man will I look, even to him that is poor and 'of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word. 'For thus ſayeth the high and lofty One, that 'inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is holy; I 'dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo 'that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit; to revive 'the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart 'of the contrite ones.'

It muſt, therefore, be the duty and intereſt of every good man, not only to reſiſt pride and vanity, but to make it a part of his daily ſupplication to God, that he may effectually be delivered from both.

5. In the laſt place, this requeſt implies a deſire to be delivered from fraud and diſſimulation of every kind. It is one of the glorious attributes of God, that he is a God of truth, who will not, and who cannot lie. He alſo requires of all his ſervants, and is delighted with truth in the inward parts. But there ſeems to be ſome difficulty in this part of the ſubject, more than in the others. Some will ſay, why pray to be delivered from fraud and diſſimulation? This might be an exhortation

tation to the sinner, but cannot be the prayer of the penitent. If they are sincere in their prayer it seems impossible there can be any danger of fraud. Fraud implies deliberation and design, and though it may be concealed from others upon whom it is exercised, it can never be concealed from the person in whom it dwells, and by whom it is contrived. This is the very language of some reasoners, who infer from it, that though there are many other sins to which a man may be liable without knowing it, yet this can never be the case with dissimulation.

But, my brethren, if we consider how apt men are, upon a sudden temptation of fear or shame, or the prospect of some advantage to themselves, to depart from strict veracity, and even to justify to their own minds, some kinds and degrees of deceptions, we shall see the absolute necessity of making this a part of our prayer to God. Nay, perhaps I may go further and say, that we are as ready to deceive ourselves in this point as in any other.

Upon this important subject, there is one consideration to which I earnestly intreat your attention. Thorough sincerity, simplicity and truth, upon every subject, have, in the world, so much the appearance of weakness; and on the contrary, being able to manage and over-reach others, has so much the appearance of superior wisdom, that men are very liable to temptation from this quarter. It is to be lamented that our language itself,

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if I may ſo ſpeak, has received a criminal taint; for in common diſcourſe, the expreſſion, 'a plain 'well meaning-man,' is always apprehended to imply, together with ſincerity, ſome degree of weakneſs; although, indeed, it is a character of all others the moſt noble. In recommendation of this character, let me obſerve, that in this, as in all the particulars mentioned above, 'the 'wicked worketh a deceitful work; but he that 'walketh uprightly walketh ſurely.' Suppoſing a man to have the prudence and diſcretion not to ſpeak without neceſſity; I affirm there is no end which a good man ought to aim at, which may not be more certainly, ſafely, and ſpeedily obtained by the ſtricteſt and moſt inviolable ſincerity, than by any acts of diſſimulation whatever.

But after all, what ſignify any ends of preſent conveniency, which diſſimulation may pretend to anſwer, compared to the favour of God, which is forfeited by it? Hear what the Pſalmiſt ſays: 'Who ſhall abide in thy tabernacle, who ſhall 'dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh up-'rightly and worketh righteouſneſs, and ſpeak-'eth the truth in his heart.'—Let us, therefore, add this to the other views of the Prophet's comprehenſive prayer, 'Remove far from me va-'nity and lies.'

For the improvement of this part of the ſubject obſerve,

1. You may learn from it how to attain, not only

only a juſtneſs and propriety, but a readineſs and fulneſs in the duty of prayer.

Nothing is a greater hindrance, either to the fervency of our affections, or the force of our expreſſions in prayer, than when the object of our deſires is confuſed and general. But when we perceive clearly what it is that is needful to us, and how much we do need it, this gives us, indeed, the ſpirit of ſupplication. Perhaps it is more neceſſary to attend to this circumſtance, in what we aſk for our ſouls, than for our bodies. When we want any thing that relates to preſent conveniency, it is clearly underſtood, becauſe it is ſenſibly felt.—There is no difficulty in crying for deliverance from poverty, ſickneſs, reproach, or any other earthly ſuffering; nay, the difficulty here is not in exciting our deſires, but in moderating them; not in producing fervour, but in promoting ſubmiſſion. But in what relates to our ſouls, becauſe many or moſt temptations are agreeable to the fleſh, we foreſee danger leſs perfectly, and even feel it leſs ſenſibly; therefore, a cloſe and deliberate attention to our ſituation and trials, as opened in the preceding diſcourſe, is of the utmoſt moment, 'both to carry us to the 'throne of grace, and to direct our ſpirit when 'we are there.'

2. What hath been ſaid will ſerve to excite us to habitual watchfulneſs, and to direct our daily converſation. The ſame things that are the ſubjects of prayer, are alſo the objects of diligence

gence.—Prayer and diligence are joined by our Saviour, and ought never to be ſeparated by his people.—Prayer without watchfulneſs is not ſincere, and watchfulneſs without prayer will not be ſucceſsful. The ſame views of ſin and duty, of the ſtrength and frequency of temptation, and the weakneſs of the tempted, lead equally to both. Let me beſeech you, then, to walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe. Maintain an habitual diffidence of yourſelves: Attend to the various dangers to which you are expoſed. Watchfulneſs of itſelf will ſave you from many temptations, and will give you an inward warrant, and humble confidence, to aſk of God ſupport under, and deliverance from, ſuch as it is impoſſible to avoid.

3. In the laſt place, ſince every thing comprehended in the petition in the text, is viewed in the light of falſehood and deceit, ſuffer me, in the moſt earneſt manner, to recommend to my hearers, and particularly to all the young perſons under my care, 'an invariable adherence to truth, 'and the moſt undiſguiſed ſimplicity and ſincerity in the whole of their converſation and carriage.' I do not know where to begin or end in ſpeaking of the excellency and beauty of ſincerity, or the baſeneſs of falſehood. Sincerity is amiable, honourable and profitable. It is the moſt ſhining part of a commendable character, and the moſt winning apology for any miſcarriage or unadviſed action.' There is ſcarcely any action

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in itſelf ſo bad, as what is implied in the hardened front of him who covers the truth with a lie: beſides, it is always a ſign of long practice in wickedneſs. Any man may be ſeduced or ſurpriſed into a fault, but none but the habitual villain can deny it it with ſteady calmneſs and obſtinacy. In this reſpect, we unhappily find ſome who are young offenders, but old ſinners.

It is not in religion only, but even among worldly men, that lying is counted the utmoſt pitch of baſeneſs; and to be called a liar, 'the 'moſt unſupportable reproach.' No wonder, indeed, for it is the very eſſence of cowardice to dare to do a thing which you have not courage to avow. The very worſt of ſinners are ſenſible of it themſelves, for they deeply reſent the imputation of it; and, if I do not miſtake, have never yet arrived at the abſurdity of defending it. There is ſcarcely any other crime, but ſome are profligate enough to boaſt of it; but I do not remember ever to have heard of any who made his boaſt, that he was a liar. To crown all, lying is the moſt wretched folly. Juſtly does Solomon ſay, 'A lying tongue is but for a mo-'ment.' It is eaſily diſcovered. Truth is a firm conſiſtent thing, every part of which agrees with, and ſtrongly ſupports another. But lies are not only repugnant to truth, but repugnant to each other; and commonly the means, like a treacherous thief, of the detection of the whole. Let me, therefore

therefore, once more recommend to every one of you, the noble character of ſincerity.—Endeavour to eſtabliſh your credit in this reſpect ſo entirely, that every word you ſpeak may be beyond the imputation of deceit; ſo that enemies may themſelves be aſhamed, that though you ſhould abuſe them, you will never deceive them.

SERMON

SERMON V.

Seeking a Competency in the Wiſdom of Providence.

PROV. xxx. 8.

Give me neither poverty, nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me.

I PROCEED now to conſider the ſecond branch of the Prophet's prayer, which regards his outward condition, or circumſtances in the preſent world. On this ſubject he expreſſes himſelf thus: 'Give me neither poverty nor riches.'

Do not think, my brethren, that this is a ſubject of little importance, or that it is unconnected with the ſpiritual life. On the contrary, there are few things of more moment, than to have our deſires of temporal bleſſings limited and directed in a proper manner. Not only is worldly

mindedneſs the everlaſting ruin of thoſe who are entirely under its dominion, but even good men are liable to many temptations from the ſame quarter. They may hurt their own peace, give offence to others, or leſſen their uſefulneſs by a ſinful exceſs in their attachment to the world, or by a criminal negligence in not giving a prudent and proper attention to it. Be not ſurpriſed that I have mentioned the laſt of theſe as well as the firſt, for the Prophet prays for deliverance from the temptation ariſing from both extremes. Idleneſs and ſloth are as contrary to true religion, as either avarice or ambition; and the habit, when once taken, is perhaps more difficult to remove.

In order to treat this ſubject with the greater diſtinctneſs, I ſhall, firſt, ſhew you what we may earn in general from this prayer; ſecondly, explain the particular object of the Prophet's deſire; and, in the laſt place, make applications of what may be ſaid, by recommending it to your choice.

I. In the firſt place, then, we may learn in general from this requeſt, that it is lawful to pray for temporal bleſſings. It is not unworthy of a Chriſtian, whoſe converſation is in heaven, to aſk of God what is neceſſary to his ſupport and preſervation in the preſent life. If I were to mention all the examples of this in ſcripture, I ſhould tranſcribe a great part of the Bible. Though inferior in their nature and value to

ſpiritual

ſpiritual bleſſings, they are neceſſary in their place; and it is upon this footing they are expreſsly put by our Saviour. 'Your heavenly 'Father knoweth that ye have need of theſe 'things.' They are needful to the prolonging of our natural life till we finiſh our work, and are fitted for our reward. Therefore, though miracles are a kind of ſuſpenſion of the laws of nature, and the ordinary courſe of providence; yet we find God ſometimes working a miracle to ſupply the wants of his ſervants. It had been no more difficult for God to have kept Elijah from hungering, than to have made the eagles fetch him proviſion; or to have made, as in another caſe, a barrel of meal, or a cruiſe of oil, the laſting and ſufficient ſupport of a whole family. But he chooſes rather to ſupply the wants of his people, than cauſe them to ceaſe, that he may keep their dependence conſtantly in their view, and that a ſenſe of their neceſſities may oblige them to have continual recourſe to him for relief.

Again, we may here learn, that God is the real and proper giver of every temporal, as well as of every ſpiritual bleſſing. A ſentiment this, of the utmoſt conſequence, to be engraven upon the heart. We have here an inſtance out of many, in which truths known and confeſſed by all, have notwithſtanding little hold upon the mind. How few are truly ſenſible of their continual obligations to the God of life? Conſider,

I beſeech you, that whatever you poſſeſs of any kind, it is the gift of God. He holdeth your ſoul in life, and guards you by his providence in your going out and your coming in. He covereth your table and filleth your cup. Have you riches? It is by the bleſſing of the God of heaven.—'The bleſſing of the Lord,' ſaith the Pſalmiſt, 'it maketh rich. But thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that 'giveth thee power to get wealth.' Have you credit and reputation? It is God that hideth you from the ſtripes of tongues. 'Thou ſhalt be 'hid from the ſcourge of the tongue, neither 'ſhalt thou be afraid of deſtruction when it 'cometh.' Have you friends? it is he that giveth you favour in their ſight. Have you talents and parts? It is the 'inſpiration of the Almighty' that giveth thee underſtanding.

II. Let us now explain the particular tenor of this petition, and point out the object of the Prophet's deſire: 'Give me neither poverty nor 'riches.' It is plain we are not to ſuppoſe the Prophet, in any degree, refuſing ſubmiſſion to the will of God, by his thus making choice of a particular ſtate of life.—Doubtleſs he reſolved to be at God's diſpoſal, and believed that he was able to ſanctify to him a ſtate of the higheſt proſperity, or of the deepeſt adverſity. It was no diſtruſt in God, but ſelf-denial and diffidence of his own ſtrength that ſuggeſted this prayer. Therefore,

Therefore, in adjuſting his deſires and expectations, he pitches upon that ſtate that appeared to him liable to the feweſt ſnares. Thus our bleſſed Saviour, though it is his will that we ſhould fear no enemy when going out in divine ſtrength, yet teaches us to pray, 'Lead us not into tempta-
'tion.'

Poverty and riches are here mentioned as the two extremes; in neither of which we ſhould wiſh to be placed, but in a ſafer middle between the two, ſo as, if it pleaſe God, we may neither be urged by preſſing neceſſity, nor overloaded with ſuch abundance, as we may be in danger of abuſing.

But perhaps ſome will ſay, Where is the middle? How ſhall we be able to determine what we ought to deſire, ſince there is ſo immenſe a diſtance, and ſo many intermediate degrees, between the extremity of want and the countleſs treaſures of the wealthy?

But, my brethren, if we do not hearken to the illuſive calls of ambition, avarice and luſt, it is by no means difficult to apprehend the meaning of the Prophet, and apply it to perſons of every rank. Regard, no doubt, is to be had to the various ſtations in which God hath thought fit to place us. This difference of ſtation requires ſupplies of the conveniences of life, ſuited to the part we are bound to act. That manner of life which would be decent and liberal in one ſtation, would be reckoned mean and ſordid in another.

Therefore what would be plenty and fulneſs to perſons in inferior ſtations, would be extreme poverty to perſons placed and called to act in higher and more exalted ſpheres. But after we have taken in the conſideration of every difference that may happen on this ſcore, there is ſomething in the prayer that belongs in common to perſons of all ſtations, namely, that we ſhould be modeſt in our deſires after temporal good things, and take care not to aſk only to gratify a ſenſual inclination, but for what is really neceſſary or uſeful to us. The laſt is reaſonable and allowable, the other is unreaſonable and juſtly condemned by the Apoſtle James. 'Ye aſk and receive not 'becauſe ye aſk amiſs, that ye may conſume it 'upon your luſts.'

But the firſt part of this requeſt is explained by the laſt, contained in the words, 'feed me 'with food convenient for me.' That we may be able to enter into the true ſpirit of this petition, I ſhall juſt compare it with ſome other ſcriptural forms of prayer on the ſame ſubject, and then endeavour to point out what I take to be the chief inſtruction intended to be conveyed to us by it.

As to the ſcripture forms of prayer for temporal proviſion, the precedence is undoubtedly due to that excellent form left us by our Saviour, in which we find this petition, 'Give us this day 'our daily bread.' You may next attend to the prayer put up by Jacob in ancient times: 'And

Jacob

'Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with 'me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and 'will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put 'on, so that I come again to my father's house 'in peace, then shall the Lord be my God.' It is more than probable, that the Apostle Paul alludes to Jacob's expression, in his excellent advice to all Christians: 'But Godliness with con-'tentment is great gain, for we brought nothing 'into this world, and it is certain we can carry 'nothing out: and having food and raiment, let 'us be therewith content. But they that will 'be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and 'into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which 'drown men in destruction and perdition;— 'for the love of money is the root of all evil, 'which, while some coveted after, they have er-'red from the faith, and pierced themselves 'through with many sorrows.'

It is obvious to remark, that all these prayers and this apostolic counsel run in the same strain. They all begin and are founded upon a regard to God, and a mind rightly disposed towards him; 'If the Lord,' says Jacob, 'will be with me.— 'Remove,' says Agur in my text, 'far from 'me vanity and lies.' Our Saviour begins his prayer with petitions for the glory of God, with which the happiness of our souls is inseparably connected; and the Apostle maintains godliness as the great source of contentment with our portion in this life.

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We may further obſerve, that there is the ſame method obſerved in all theſe prayers. The expreſſions vary a little, but the requeſt is the ſame. Jacob wiſhes for the divine protection, with food to eat, and raiment to put on. Agur for food convenient for him; and in the Lord's prayer, we aſk for our daily bread. There is no ſpecifying of any particulars,—no mention made of this or the other quantity of proviſion. Their deſires are ſummed up in this general requeſt, and the quantity and quality wholly referred to the good pleaſure of God. It is certain that God hath ſometimes granted to his own people riches in great abundance; and, at the ſame time, has given his bleſſing to enjoy them, and honoured the poſſeſſors, by enabling them to glorify him in the uſe and application of them. But the direct deſire of riches, I do not think, hath any warrant from precept or example in his word; and when they are beſtowed as a bleſſing, and not as a curſe, it is commonly on thoſe who by their ſuperior concern about the better part, ſhew that they will put them to their proper uſe, as in the caſe of Solomon recorded in the firſt book of Kings. 'In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a 'dream by night; and God ſaid, Aſk what I 'ſhall give thee?' And he ſaid, 'Give thy ſervant an underſtanding heart. And the ſpeech 'pleaſed the Lord, that Solomon had aſked this 'thing. And God ſaid, Becauſe thou haſt aſked 'this thing, and haſt not aſked for thyſelf long 'life

'life, neither haſt aſked riches for thyſelf, nor 'haſt aſked the life of thine enemies, but haſt 'aſked for thyſelf underſtanding, to diſcern 'judgment: Behold, I have done according to 'thy words: Lo! I have given thee a wiſe and 'an underſtanding heart, ſo that there was none 'like thee before thee, neither after thee ſhall any 'ariſe like unto thee. And I have alſo given thee 'that which thou haſt not aſked, both riches 'and honour.'

Now this I take to be the main inſtruction intended to be given us with reſpect to our prayers for temporal mercies, that we ſhould not pretend to ſet bounds to God, but leave the meaſure of them to his determination.

For further explaining this truth, and at the ſame time, recommending it to your regard, be pleaſed to attend to the following obſervations.

1. Conſider that God, infinitely wiſe, as well as gracious, is certainly the beſt judge of what is moſt fit and convenient for us. We know ſo little of ourſelves, that we really know not how we ſhould behave, if placed in particular circumſtances, until we are tried. The world has actually ſeen many examples of thoſe who were loud in their accuſations of others, behaving worſe when placed in the ſame ſtations. And, indeed, I ſhould naturally expect, that an impatient, envious, diſobedient ſubject would, if raiſed to power, be a cruel, inſolent, unjuſt oppreſſor; that a petulant

lant, peeviſh, obſtinate ſervant would make a capricious, ſevere, unreaſonable maſter.

If we were to carve out our own lot, and to have all our own deſires gratified, there is great reaſon to preſume we would throw ourſelves into the moſt diſagreable circumſtances with regard to our ſouls, and probably conſult but ill for our peace and comfort in this world.

Let me put a few queſtions to every one that ſecretly murmurs at his ſtate. Are you ſure, that if you were advanced to a place of power and truſt, you would be able to carry yourſelf with prudence, reſolution and integrity? Are you ſure, that if you were ſupplied with riches in great abundance, you would not allow yourſelves to wallow in pleaſure, or to ſwell in pride? Are you ſure, that if you were raiſed to high rank, ſurrounded by flatterers, and worſhipped by ſervants, you would, in that ſtanding, behave with humility and condeſcenſion; or, that preſſed on all hands by buſineſs, company, or amuſements, 'you would ſtill 'religiouſly ſave your time for converſe with 'God?'

A life of piety in an exalted ſtation, is a continual conflict with the ſtrongeſt oppoſition. What ſays experience upon this ſubject? Solomon did not wholly, and to the end, reſiſt the temptation of riches and dominion. In the whole compaſs of hiſtory, ſacred and profane, I do not remember any example of a man's behaving better in point of morals, in a proſperous than in

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an afflicted ſtate, excepting one that hath this appearance, viz. Cicero, the Roman orator. His conduct in proſperity was full of dignity, and ſeemed wholly directed to the public good; whereas in adverſity, it was to the laſt degree mean and abject.—But probably the reaſon of this was, that pride, or rather vanity, was his ruling paſſion, and the great motive to his illuſtrious actions; and when he fell into adverſity, this diſpoſition had no ſcope for its exerciſe.

Chriſtians, the Lord knoweth our frame, and is well acquainted with what we are able to bear, and conſequently what ſtate of life will be upon the whole moſt convenient for us. It is, therefore, our intereſt, as well as duty, to refer ourſelves entirely to him, and leave him to chuſe for us. This is not only the doctrine of Scripture, but ſo agreable to reaſon and good ſenſe, that it has been acknowledged by ſeveral of the Heathen philoſophers, who have expreſſed themſelves in terms perfectly ſimilar to thoſe of the inſpired writings. The prayer which Socrates taught his pupil Alcibiades, is very remarkable; that he ſhould beſeech the Supreme God to give him what was good for him, though he ſhould not aſk it, and to withhold from him whatever would be hurtful, though he ſhould be ſo fooliſh as to pray for it.

2. As God is certainly the beſt judge of what is good for us, ſo reſignation to him is a moſt acceptable expreſſion, both of our worſhip and obedience.

bedience. Single duties are particular acts; reſignation is the very habit of obedience. The wiſdom and goodneſs of God are acknowledged in the moſt authentic manner, when his holy and ſovereign Providence is humbly ſubmitted to, and cordially approved. Every impatient complaint is an impeachment of Providence; every irregular deſire is an act of rebellion againſt God. Therefore a ſubmiſſive temper muſt be highly pleaſing to God, and is the way to glorify him in the moſt unexceptionable manner. The rather indeed, as it is impoſſible to attain this temper, but by ſincerely laying hold of the covenant of peace, which is ordered in all things and ſure. This teaches us the grounds of ſubmiſſion. This procures for us the grace of ſubmiſſion. This ſtains the pride of all human glory. This changes the nature of our poſſeſſions to us, and us to them. This ſpiritualizes a worldly mind, and makes us know, in our own experience, that all the paths of the Lord to his own people are mercy and peace.

3. Such a temper of mind will greatly contribute to our own inward peace. It will be an effectual preſervative from all unrighteous courſes and unlawful or even diſhonourable means of increaſing our worldly ſubſtance, and conſequently ſave us from the troubles or dangers to which men expoſe themſelves by ſuch practices. It will preſerve us from perplexing anxiety, and many uneaſy fears for futurity. It will bring us the near

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and sure way to the greatest of all earthly blessings,—a contented mind.

Such will be the sweet and delightful effects of depending upon God, and leaving it to him to furnish our supplies as he sees most convenient for us. Whoever can pray with the Prophet, 'Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with 'food convenient for me,' may be fully assured that his desire shall be gratified, as it is perfectly agreeable to the will of God.

I conclude with reading to you our Saviour's exhortation on this subject. 'Therefore, I say 'unto you, take no thought for your life, what 'ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet 'for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not 'the life more than meat, and the body than rai-'ment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they 'sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into 'barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. 'Are not ye much better than they? But seek 'ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteous-'ness, and all these things shall be added unto 'you.

SERMON VI.

The Danger of Proſperity.

PROV. xxx. 9.

Leſt I be full and deny thee, and ſay, who is the Lord? Or, leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.

I PROCEED now to conſider the arguments by which the Prophet enforces his wiſe and well-conceived prayer. Theſe, in connection with the two branches of the prayer, ſtand thus: 'Give me not riches, leſt I be full and deny 'thee, and ſay, who is the Lord? And give me 'not poverty, leſt I be poor, and ſteal, and take 'the name of my God in vain.' If Agur's prayer is conceived in the moſt modeſt and humble terms, the reaſons with which he ſupports it are every way becoming a truly wiſe and good man. You ſee in them a prevailing concern for the honour and glory of God, and his own

own preſervation in the paths of piety and virtue. You ſee in them a humble ſenſe of his own weakneſs, and the danger of temptation; he, therefore, deſires to be placed in ſuch a ſtate of life as will expoſe him to the fewеſt trials. An excellent diſpoſition this, and highly worthy of our imitation. How happy would it be for us all, if a deſire to pleaſe God and preſerve our integrity, lay always neareſt our hearts, and had a conſtant and commanding influence on every ſtep we took in our journey through life!

Neither riches nor poverty are bad in themſelves. Neither of them is any recommendation or hindrance to the favour of God, who is no reſpecter of perſons. There are good and bad in all ranks. Men may be rich, and yet pious; or poor, yet ſtrictly juſt and honeſt. It is, I confeſs, often done, yet it is highly criminal to look upon all that are rich in this world as profane; and it would be equally ſo to look upon all that are poor as deſtitute of integrity. Yet it is undeniable, that, from the corruption of the human heart, theſe two extremes do often become ſtrong temptations to the particular ſins mentioned in the text; which we ſhall now conſider ſeparately, in the order in which they lie in the paſſage before us.

'Give me not riches, leſt I be full and deny 'thee, and ſay, who is the Lord?'

As to the fact, that riches do often lead to profanity and contempt of God, experience, and

the state of the world, prove it in a manner too plain to be denied. We not only see that those, who are born and educated from their infancy in the higher ranks of life, are most prone to neglect the duties of religion; but those who, from a low or mean condition, are remarkably raised in the course of providence, do often change their temper with their state, and show the unhappy influence of riches in leading them to a forgetfulness of God. Are there not some who were regularly in God's house when they but barely subsisted, who have not time for it now, when they are busy and wealthy? Are there not some families, where the worship of God was constant and regular in early life, while they were undistinguished, and now it is no more to be heard in their sumptuous palaces and elegant apartments? Shall I say, that any worm of the earth is become too considerable to fall down before the omnipotent Jehovah?

I may add, as being of great importance in the present subject, that such changes do often take place gradually and insensibly, very much contrary to men's own expectation; so that we really do not know ourselves, nor can we determine before trial, how far we would resist or yield to the force of temptation. The prophet Elisha foretold to Hazael the cruelties he would be guilty of when raised to an higher station; to which he replied with disdain and abhorrence, 'What, is thy servant a dog, that he should do

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'this great thing? And Eliſha anſwered, the 'Lord hath ſhewed me that thou ſhalt be King 'over Syria.' The conduct of the children of Iſrael in their proſperity is but an emblem of the general conduct of the children of men. 'But 'Jeſhurun waxed fat, and kicked. Thou art wax-'ed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered 'with fatneſs: Then he forſook God which made 'him, and lightly eſteemed the rock of his ſalvation.'

What hath been ſaid might be ſufficient to ſhew the propriety of the Prophet's prayer; for if ſuch hath been often, or generally, the influence of worldly greatneſs upon other men, why ſhould any be ſo confident as to preſume it would be otherwiſe with themſelves? But perhaps it may afford matter of uſeful inſtruction to enquire a little further into the ſubject, to trace the cauſes of this effect, and ſhew how, and why riches become an inducement to irreligion and profaneneſs, for this will beſt enable us to apply the remedy. When I ſpeak of examining the cauſes of this effect, I confeſs that no reaſon can be given for it, but what reflects great diſhonour upon human nature in its preſent ſtate. Were we to judge of the matter by the dictates of ſound reaſon, we ſhould naturally expect to find it directly contrary. God is the author of every bleſſing which men poſſeſs, and his gifts ſhould lead us to gratitude and acknowledgment. It ſeems natural then to ſuppoſe, that thoſe who are moſt highly favoured in the courſe of pro-

vidence, ſhould diſcover the greateſt ſenſe of obligation, and be ready to make every dutiful return. One would think, that though the poor ſhould be impatient, ſurely the rich will be content and thankful. Is not this reaſonable? Had any of you beſtowed many favours upon others, would you not expect that their gratitude ſhould bear ſome proportion to the number and value of benefits received? Had any of them been remarkably diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, would you not expect from them the moſt inviolable fidelity and attachment? Strange, that our conduct ſhould be ſo directly oppoſite in the returns we make for the goodneſs of our Maker! That thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed from others by the largeſt poſſeſſions, and the greateſt fulneſs of all temporal mercies, ſhould be the moſt prone to wickedneſs of all ſorts; but eſpecially, that they ſhould be peculiarly inclined to forgetfulneſs and contempt of God. Yet ſo it is in truth. But however diſhonourable it is to human nature, let us ſearch into it a little, and perhaps we may diſcover the cauſe of impiety in perſons in affluent circumſtances, and the danger the Prophet would avoid, by attending to the following obſervations:

1. An eaſy and affluent fortune affords the means, not only of pampering our bodies, but of gratifying all our luſts and appetites. They are as ſtrong probably in perſons of inferior ſtations; but providence has rendered the gratification more

more difficult, and in ſome caſes impoſſible. Many work through neceſſity, who would be as idle and ſlothful as any, but for the fear of want. Theſe will be the firſt and readieſt to reproach the rich, and call them idle drones, who revel in that abundance for which they never toiled; and to put to their own credit that which is wholly owing to the reſtraints under which they are laid. Many are generally ſober, becauſe they cannot afford the charges of intemperance, who want nothing but the means, to riot in the moſt brutal ſenſuality. But to perſons of great wealth, the objects of deſire are always placed in full view, and are evidently within their reach; ſo that the temptation has uncommon force, and few are able entirely to reſiſt it.

2. The indulgence of pleaſure inſenſibly induces a habit, and leads men to place their happineſs in ſuch enjoyments. Habit, you know, is very powerful, and while the habit acquires ſtrength, the power of reſiſtance is gradually weakened. Theſe gratifications conſume ſo much time, that there is little left to reflect upon God and our relation to him. I reckon it none of the leaſt temptations to perſons of high rank, that not only their ſelf-indulgence, but the attendance and obſequiouſneſs of others ſo engroſſes their attention, and waſtes their time, that they have few opportunities of calm and ſober reflection; or, at leaſt, can eaſily eſcape from it, and take refuge in company and amuſement. Add to this,

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that a great variety of ſenſible objects and enjoyments render the mind, not only leſs attentive to things of a ſpiritual nature, but indeed, leſs able to underſtand them.

3. Obſerve further, that when the better part is thus neglected, and no care taken of the cultivation of the mind, every vice will ſpring and ſhoot up in the ſoul, as briars and thorns do upon uncultivated ground. Sin, my brethren, is natural to us; it is the produce of the ſoil; if it is not deſtroyed, it will not die; if it is but neglected, it will thrive. Now, whenever perſons fall under the power of vice, they begin firſt to excuſe, and then to vindicate it. Thoſe who are under the government of luſt, ſoon find it would be their intereſt that there was no ſuch thing as religion and virtue. Whatever we wiſh, we are eaſily led to believe to be true. Looſe and atheiſtical principles then find a ready admittance, and are ſwallowed down greedily. This is a ſhort ſketch of the ſteps by which people in affluent and eaſy circumſtances are often led to deny God, and to ſay, 'Who is the Almighty 'that we ſhould ſerve him, and what profit 'ſhould we have if we pray unto him?'—Looſe principles are, at firſt, more frequently the effect, than the cauſe of looſe practices; but when once they have taken deep root, and obtained full dominion in the heart, they have a dreadful and fatal influence on the devoted victim.

But, my brethren, I find a strong inclination to make another remark, though perhaps it may be thought of too refined and abstract a nature. It is, that the danger of affluence in leading to contempt of God, arises from the nature of all sin as such. The original and first sin of man was plainly affecting independence. They desired and expected to be as gods, knowing good and evil. And still sin properly consists in withdrawing our allegiance from, and throwing off our dependence upon God, and giving, as it were, that esteem, love and service to ourselves, in one shape or another, that is due only to him. Now observe, that affluence nourishes this mistake, and suffering kills it. The more every thing abounds with us, the more our will is submitted to, and our inclination gratified on every subject; the more we look upon ourselves as independent, and forget our obligations to God. Whereas, on the other hand, disappointments and calamities open our blind eyes, and make us remember what we are. Was not the proud monarch of Babylon inspired with this delusive sense of independence, when he expressed himself thus: 'At the end of twelve months he 'walked in the palace of the kingdom of Baby-'lon. The King spake and said, Is not this 'great Babylon that I have built for the house 'of the kingdom, by the might of my power, 'and for the honour of my Majesty!' But mark the more powerful word of the King of Kings.

'While

'While the word was in the King's mouth, 'there fell a voice from heaven, ſaying, O King 'Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is ſpoken, the 'kingdom is departed from thee!' That this is the proper ſource of worldly greatneſs, may be ſeen in the temper ſuch perſons uſually acquire and ſettle in, which is pride, inſolence, and contempt of others. Nay, it appears ſtill more clearly in ſome few inſtances, in which the intoxication comes to its height, and the poor deluded mortal literally aſpires to be conſidered and treated as God. It may ſeem incredible, but we have the moſt authentic evidence that hiſtory can afford, that ſome men have demanded and received divine worſhip. This was the caſe, not only with Alexander the Great, who was really an illuſtrious prince, but with ſome of the latter Roman Emperors, who were the meaneſt and baſeſt of all men. No wonder, then, that proſperity makes men neglect God, when it prompts them to ſit down upon his throne, and rob him of the ſervice of his other ſubjects.

Before I proceed to the other part of the Prophet's argument, ſuffer me to make a few remarks for the improvement of what has been already ſaid. And,

1. See hence the great malignity and deceitfulneſs of ſin. It hardly appears more ſtrongly from any circumſtance than that which has been the ſubject of this diſcourſe, viz. that the gifts of God, in the courſe of his providence, are ſo far

far from exciting our gratitude, in proportion to their number and value, that, on the contrary, thoſe who 'receive moſt' are uſually 'moſt pro-'fane.' They make his favours inſtruments of rebellion againſt him, and return contempt for his indulgence, and hatred for his love.

Let us not take occaſion from this to gratify our own envy, by particular or perſonal reproach againſt thoſe who are great, or have become rich amongſt themſelves; but let us act a far wiſer and juſter part, and be humbled for the ſinfulneſs of our nature, and warned of the deceitfulneſs of ſin. We may feel the ſeeds of this diſpoſition in us all. You find the wiſe man charging a ſimilar ingratitude upon man in general. 'Becauſe ſen-'tence againſt an evil work is not executed 'ſpeedily, therefore the heart of the ſons of men 'is fully ſet in them to do evil.' And do you not obſerve every day, nay, has it not turned into a proverb, that we think light of our mercies, ſpiritual and temporal, when they are common and abundant? And what is the true and proper interpretation of this, but that the greater God's goodneſs is to us, commonly the leſs is our gratitude to him?

2. Let me beſeech you to make a wiſe improvement of the advantages you enjoy over one another. Let them excite in you a holy emulation to teſtify your ſenſe of ſuperior bleſſings, by ſuperior piety and uſefulneſs. Do you excel others in any reſpect? Are you ſucceſsful in trade?

trade? Have you risen to reputation? Are you exalted to offices of dignity? Are you endowed with capacity of mind? Can you remember the time when those were your equals who are now your inferiors? Do not look with insolence upon others, making odious, and perhaps unjust comparisons. Do not swell in pride and self-complacence, as if by your own power you had made yourselves to differ, but rather look the other way to God, who is the maker both of rich and poor, and pray that your thankfulness and duty to him may exceed that of the poor man, as much as his liberality to you exceeds what he has thought proper to bestow upon him. This affords me an opportunity of relating a little piece of private history, that happened in Great Britain, and appears to me very worthy of remembrance, and very conducive to the ends of edification.

A gentleman of very considerable fortune, but a stranger to either personal or family religion, one evening took a solitary walk through a part of his own grounds. He happened to come near to a mean hut, where a poor man with a numerous family lived, who earned their bread by daily labour. He heard a voice pretty loud and continued. Not knowing what it was, curiosity prompted him to listen. The man, who was piously disposed, happened to be at prayer with his family. So soon as he could distinguish the words, he heard him giving thanks with great affection to God, for the goodness of his Providence

dence, in giving them food to eat, and raiment to put on, and in supplying them with what was neceſſary and comfortable in the preſent life. He was immediately, no doubt, by Divine power, ſtruck with aſtoniſhment and confuſion, and ſaid to himſelf, Does this poor man, who has nothing but the meaneſt fare, and that purchaſed by ſevere labour, give thanks to God for his goodneſs to himſelf and family, and I, who enjoy eaſe and honour, and every thing that is grateful and deſirable, have hardly ever bent my knee, or made any acknowledgment to my Maker and Preſerver! It pleaſed God, that this providential occurrence proved the mean of bringing him to a real and laſting ſenſe of God and religion.

Let all perſons in health, quiet and plentiful circumſtances, learn from the preceding diſcourſe, what it is they ought clearly to guard againſt.—Pride, ſecurity, forgetfulneſs of God, are peculiarly incident to that ſtate. 'Lo this,' ſaith the Lord to Jeruſalem, 'was the iniquity of thy ſiſ-'ter Sodom, pride, fulneſs of bread, and abun-'dance of idleneſs was in her, and in her daugh-'ters, neither did ſhe ſtrengthen the hand of 'the poor and needy.' A ſerious reflection on the obligation ſuch lie under to God for what they have received in their continued dependence upon him, and the inſtability of all earthly things, would ſave them from the hurtful influence of worldly proſperity. To enforce this, I ſhall only read the apoſtolic charge to Timothy. 'Charge

'them that are rich in this world, that they be 'not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, 'but in the living God, who giveth us all things 'richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they 'be rich in good works, ready to distribute, wil-'ling to communicate; laying up in store for 'themselves a good foundation against the time 'to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.'

SERMON

SERMON VII.

The Danger of Adverſity.

PROVERBS XXX. 9.

Leſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the name of my God in vain.

I PROCEED now to conſider the argument by which the Prophet urges the ſecond branch of his requeſt, which, in connexion, runs thus—'Give me not poverty leaſt I be poor and ſteal.' Having not only explained the general principle that runs through the whole of this ſubject, but alſo very particularly pointed out the dangers attending an opulent and wealthy ſtate; I ſhall endeavour to do the ſame thing with reſpect to a ſtate of poverty and ſtraitneſs. While I attempt this, I am ſincerely ſorry that there is ſo much propriety in the ſubject, and that it is ſo well ſuit-

ed to the circumſtances of the inhabitants of this place. You ſee the Prophet conſiders the great and general temptation to which the poor are expoſed to be diſhoneſty, by uſing fraudalent means of relieving their wants, or bettering their condition. You ſee alſo, he conſiders this temptation in its progreſs, not only inclining them to act unjuſtly, but ſometimes proceeding to the terrible degree of concealing or ſupporting the fraud by falſehood, and perhaps at laſt by perjury or falſe ſwearing; 'leaſt I be poor and ſteal, and take the 'name of my God in vain.'

Let us firſt conſider a little the matter of fact, as it appears in experience, and then a few of its principal cauſes.

As to the firſt of theſe, ſhall I be afraid to affirm, that extreme poverty often inclines perſons to diſhoneſty and fraud? Will it be thought harſh and ſevere to thoſe already ſufficiently depreſſed? As I would not ſeem to ſtand in this place and flatter the pride of the greateſt, and moſt eminent of my fellow-ſinners, ſo neither will I diſſemble the truth from a falſe compaſſion for the poor. This would indeed be doing them the greateſt poſſible injury. It would be treating them, from miſtaken tenderneſs, as the rich are often treated from the fear or partiality of thoſe who are about them; foſtering their ſelf-deceit, and not ſuffering them to hear the moſt ſalutary truths, becauſe they are not pleaſing to the fleſh.

It

It is undoubtedly matter of experience, that great poverty makes many take unjuſt and unwarrantable methods of procuring relief. Not only ſo, but they ſeem often diſpoſed to juſtify and defend them, as if they had a title to rectify what they think miſtakes of Providence, in the diſtribution of worldly poſſeſſions. This, in the event, receives great encouragement from ſome who ſeem to have imbibed a general falſe principle, and act upon it, both in their own conduct, and in their judgment of others. In the diviſion of controverſy, or dividing diſputed property, when one party is, or is ſuppoſed to be rich, and in eaſy circumſtances, and the other poor, and in a mean condition, they think, that inſtead of acting according to ſtrict juſtice, the advantage ſhould always be made to fall on the poorer ſide. This conduct is conſidered by ſome, not only as lawful, but as laudable. It is, however, a falſe principle, and is condemned in Scripture, which ſays, 'Neither ſhalt thou countenance a poor 'man in his cauſe.' It may be thought, perhaps, that the other is the more common and dangerous partiality, and probably it is ſo; yet this alſo is blameworthy, and when followed out, as I am afraid it too often is, muſt involve numbers unawares in the guilt of ſtealing; for when they have once laid down this rule, that the poor have ſome claim upon the rich, they are ready to apply it to their own caſe, and extend it very far. But in all matters of property, or right and wrong,

whether a perſon is rich or poor, ought to be utterly out of the queſtion; the only thing to be conſidered is, what is juſt and lawful. The rich, are, indeed, in point of conſcience, bound to aſſiſt the poor: but this muſt be their own act; no perſon can take the ſmalleſt part of their property without their conſent, but he is guilty of an act of injuſtice, and violation of the law of God. No perſon has a right to make them generous and charitable againſt their wills, or to exerciſe their own generoſity and charity at their expence. This muſt be left to the Supreme Judge at the laſt day, who will ſay to them, 'I was a ſtranger 'and ye took me not in, naked and ye clothed 'me not, ſick and in priſon and ye viſited me 'not.' But what will give us the moſt diſtinct view of the influence of poverty as a temptation, is the too frequent conduct of thoſe who are reduced from what was once their ſtate to poverty or debt, by misfortune or extravagance, or miſmanagement of their affairs. The temptation of poverty is not by far ſo great to thoſe in the meaneſt ranks of life, whoſe income, though ſmall, is not very diſproportionate to what hath always been their condition, as to thoſe who are reduced from a higher to a lower ſtate. The few who, in ſuch a ſituation, preſerve their integrity inviolated, and their ſincerity of ſpeech unſuſpected, deſerve the higheſt honour. Nay, I am perſuaded that, bad as the world is, every perſon in reduced circumſtances would meet with compaſſion and aſſiſtance,

aſſiſtance, if all about him were ſenſible that he had neither loſt his ſubſtance by neglect, nor waſted it by riot, nor concealed it by fraud. But though we cannot help aſcribing ſome meaſure of what is laid to the charge of perſons in this unhappy ſtate, to the rage and reſentment of thoſe who have ſuffered by them; yet, alas! there is too great reaſon to affirm, that they are too often guilty of prevarication and fraud, the ſins mentioned in the text.

I will dwell no longer upon the fact, but will conſider a little the reaſons of it, which will directly ſerve to promote the deſign of this diſcourſe, by exciting men to concern and ſolicitude, as well as pointing out the proper means of avoiding the temptation. The general reaſon of this, to be ſure, is obvious to every body, that perſons in poverty, being ſtrongly ſolicited by the appetites common to all men, and not having of their own wherewith to gratify their deſires, are tempted to lay hold of the property of others. They grudge to ſee that others have the enjoyments from which they are debarred; and ſince they cannot have them in a lawful, make bold to ſeize them in an unlawful way. But this I do not inſiſt on, that I may mention one or two particular reaſons, which will ſuggeſt ſuitable exhortations to duty.

1. The firſt I ſhall mention, is ignorance. This is peculiarly applicable to thoſe in the loweſt ranks of life. Through poverty they are not ſo well

well inſtructed, as they ought to be, in the principles of religion, and the great rules of duty. An ignorant ſtate is almoſt always a ſtate of ſecurity. Their conſciences are leſs tender, and they are leſs ſenſible of the great evil of prevarication and fraud. I am obliged, in fidelity, to ſay, that in the private inſpection of my charge, though I have found ſome inſtances both of poverty and ſickneſs borne with the moſt pious reſignation; there are alſo ſome whoſe condition might move the hardeſt heart, living in the moſt ſordid poverty, groſsly ignorant, and, at the ſame time, ſo diſpirited, ſo ſlothful, or ſo proud, that they will do little to obtain knowledge for themſelves, or communicate it to their children. Many will not attend upon the public means of inſtruction, becauſe they cannot appear in ſuch a decent garb as they could wiſh; and for the ſame reaſon they keep their children from them, till they contract ſuch habits of idleneſs and vice, that they come out into the world without principle, obſtinate and untractable. Is not the duty here very plain? All ſuch ſhould exert themſelves to obtain the knowledge of the things which belong to their peace. They ſhould neither be unwilling nor aſhamed to make application for ſupply; and even the coarſeſt raiment ſhould not hinder them from appearing in the houſe of God. Thus they will find acceptance with him, if they worſhip him in the beauty of holineſs, preferably to thoſe who are cloathed

cloathed in purple and fine linen, and whoſe hearts are after their covetouſneſs.

2. Another great reaſon why poverty becomes a temptation to fraud is, that they are introduced to it inſenſibly, and led on by degrees. The ſin ſteals upon them by little and little. People involved in their circumſtances, to get rid of importunity and ſolicitation, make promiſes more of what they hope or wiſh, than of what they are able to do. Neceſſity ſerves as an excuſe for their failing to their own minds, and thus they are gradually brought into a breach of ſincerity, and proceed from lower to higher degrees of falſehood. Little arts of evaſion are firſt made uſe of, and doubtful practices are entered upon. One ſin ſeems neceſſary to ſtrengthen or conceal another, till at laſt the groſſeſt fraud, and ſometimes perjury itſelf, cloſes the unhappy ſcene. I have read an excellent obſervation, that there is hardly ſuch a thing as a ſingle ſin; they are always to be found in cluſters. I am ſure, this holds in a particular manner as to ſins of injuſtice. They are ſo interwoven and connected together, that you cannot receive any one without being obliged to admit the reſt. This is one great branch of the deceitfulneſs of ſin in general; with a view to which the apoſtle ſays, 'But exhort one another daily, 'while it is called to-day, leaſt any of you be har-'dened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin.'

3. I only mention one other reaſon of poverty being a temptation to fraud, viz. that in time it deſtroys

deſtroys the ſenſe of ſhame. I am not ignorant, that a ſenſe of ſhame, which is nothing elſe but a fear of the cenſure of others, neither is, nor ought to be the main principle of a good man's actions. But as there is no other principle at all in many, ſo it is a good aſſiſtant and corroborative, when juſtly directed: but now through the corrupt maxims of the world, poverty is ſo much the object of contempt, and thoſe who are in this ſtate, meet every day with ſo many marks of neglect from all, that before their condition is known, they will do almoſt any thing to conceal it, and after it is known, they become in time ſo deſtitute of ſhame that they are under no further reſtraint.

From this particular branch of the ſubject, let me put you in mind,

1. What reaſon many have to be thankful to the God of life, who hath given them their daily proviſion, if not in all abundance of immenſe riches, yet in fulneſs and ſufficiency. An humble, thankful diſpoſition is not only your duty, in return for the divine bounty, but is itſelf the richeſt and ſweeteſt ingredient in all temporal mercies. It is that, indeed, which makes them mercies. Envious perſons do not taſte what they have, their evil eye being fixed on what they cannot obtain. Things in this reſpect are juſt what they ſeem to be. Our comforts are as we are enabled to reliſh them. The ſame poſſeſſions which are deſpiſed by the impatient or ambitious

ambitious, are a treaſure and abundance to the humble and grateful.

2. If poverty is a temptation, it ought to be an argument to all to avoid it, or ſeek deliverance from it by lawful means. Apply yourſelves with ſteadineſs and perſeverance to the duties of your calling, that you may provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men. It is a duty of the law, and of the Goſpel; and it hath this promiſe in general annexed to it, that 'the hand of the 'diligent maketh rich.' Read, I beſeech you, that vaſt treaſure of uſeful inſtruction, the book of Proverbs, where you will meet with many excellent counſels and wiſe obſervations upon this ſubject. Of theſe I ſhall mention at preſent but two paſſages, ſelected both for the ſoundneſs of the inſtruction, and the beauty of the illuſtration. 'Go to the ant, thou ſluggard, conſider 'her ways and be wiſe; which having no guide, 'overſeer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the 'ſummer, and gathereth her food in the harveſt. 'How long wilt thou ſleep, O ſluggard? When 'wilt thou ariſe out of thy ſleep? So ſhall thy 'poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy 'want as an armed man.' And again: 'I went 'by the field of the ſlothful, and by the vine-'yard of the man void of underſtanding; and lo 'it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles 'had covered the face thereof, and the ſtone-'wall thereof was broken down.'

3. Are any of you poor and reduced in your circum-

circumſtances, ſet a double watch upon your conduct, and earneſtly pray that God may preſerve you from fraud and diſingenuity of every kind. Rather ſuffer yourſelves to be ſtripped of every thing, and apply to the charity of others, which is not ſinful, and ought not to be ſhameful, than take any diſhoneſt methods of bettering your ſtate. O melancholy thought, that many when they become deſperate in their circumſtances, become alſo deſperate in their courſes, and drown the reflection of their conſciences in ſlothfulneſs and ſenſuality? Sincerity, integrity, patience and ſobriety in a ruined fortune, are doubly eminent, at leaſt, whatever they may be in the ſight of the world, they are honourable and precious in the ſight of God, and of all good men.

Before concluding, ſuffer me to make one or two reflections on the ſubject in general; the ſeveral parts of which I have now explained. And,

1. On what hath been ſaid on this ſubject, I would graft this important leſſon, that you ſhould not only ſtudy to preſerve yourſelves from ſin, but from all ſuch circumſtances of temptation as are dangerous to human conſtancy. This was the very ground of the prayer of the Prophet in my text, and is the ſubſtance of the reaſons he aſſigns for his requeſt. We are taught the ſame thing in the ſtrongeſt manner, by the ſeveral inſtances of human frailty, and the folly of preſumptuous confidence, recorded in Scripture.

ture. 'Now all theſe things happened unto 'them for enſamples, and they are written for 'our admonition, upon whom the ends of the 'world are come. Wherefore, let him that 'thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.' We are alſo taught the ſame thing by him who knew what was in man, as he has given us directions in the form of prayer which he taught his diſciples to ſay, Lord, 'lead us not into 'temptation.'

Are you really unwilling to do evil, you will be concerned to keep yourſelves out of the way of every ſolicitation to it. This is conſtantly the effect of a judicious and ſolid piety, and thoſe who act otherwiſe ſhew, that they either have no real goodneſs, or that they are very weak Chriſtians, and little acquainted either with themſelves, or this preſent evil world.

2. You may learn how neceſſary it is, that you ſhould look for the Diviſe aſſiſtance and direction, to avoid the temptation of every ſtate of life. We are truly of ourſelves unequal to the trials with which we are ſurrounded. Not that there is any thing unjuſt or oppreſſive in the meaſures of Providence; but becauſe it ſeems good to our Maker to oblige us to a conſtant dependence upon himſelf and his promiſed help. 'But God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you 'to be tempted above that ye are able, but will 'with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, 'that ye may be able to bear it.'

The leaſt temptation may prove too hard for us, if we neglect to apply for ſupreme aid; but in divine ſtrength, we may bid defiance to the moſt formidable oppoſition. This temper is well exemplified and deſcribed by the Apoſtle Paul to the Corinthians. 'And he ſaid unto me, my 'grace is ſufficient for thee, for my ſtrength is 'made perfect in weakneſs. Moſt gladly, there-'fore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that 'the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me. There-'fore, I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, 'in neceſſities, in perſecution, in diſtreſſes for 'Chriſt's ſake; for when I am weak then am I 'ſtrong.'

3. From what hath been ſaid, you may ſee what an inſeparable connection there is between true religion, and your employments and ſtate in this preſent world. They have a mutual, ſtrong, and conſtant influence upon one another. It is a fatal, though a common error, to ſeparate them; entirely to confine religion to the times and places of immediate worſhip, and ſuppoſe that it hath nothing to do with the maxims of trade and commerce, or other worldly callings. On the contrary, your impreſſions of things ſpiritual and eternal, will direct and regulate your views as to the preſent life; and your ſucceſs or misfortunes in worldly ſchemes will have a certain and viſible effect upon your Chriſtian converſation, and the ſtate of your ſouls. Therefore, let them never be ſeparated in your own views, and let them ſtill

be

be kept in their proper order and ſubordination. Though the light and trivial uſe, not only of the name of God, but of ſcripture-language, is both ſinful and dangerous; and though a forward oſtentatious piety may ſometimes look ſuſpicious, yet it were to be wiſhed we had more of a grave and habitual acknowledgement of God in all our ways. This was the language of the Patriarchs of old. In one of the former diſcourſes upon this ſubject, I took notice of Jacob's prayer, when he ſet out for Padan-aram. See after the increaſe of his family, how he expreſſes himſelf in anſwer to his brother Iſaac. 'And he lift up his 'eyes and ſaw the women and children, and 'ſaid, who are thoſe with thee? And he ſaid, 'the children which God hath graciouſly given 'thy ſervant.' See alſo the Apoſtolical direction for the manner of projecting our future purpoſes. 'Go to now, ye that ſay to-day, or to-'morrow, we will go into ſuch a city, and con-'tinue there a year, and buy and ſell, and get 'gain.'

4. In the laſt place, let me beſeech, in the tendereſt manner, every one of you, rich and poor, to remember an approaching eternity. It will not be long till the honourable and deſpiſed, the wealthy and the needy, the maſter and the ſervant, ſhall lie down in the duſt. Lay hold of that covenant of peace, which is ordered in all things and ſure. Hear a great and conſtant truth: 'What is a man profited, though he ſhould gain

'the whole world and loſe his own ſoul, or 'what ſhall a man give in exchange for his 'ſoul?' How many a Lazarus is now in Abraham's boſom; and how many a rich man, that once lived delicately on earth, is at this moment tormented in hell-fire! The Goſpel of peace is now preached in your ears. Believe in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and ye ſhall be ſaved. I cannot promiſe that you ſhall be rich, but all things neceſſary are aſſured to you by the divine promiſe; food and raiment, ſupport under trials, ſtrength for duty, and in the world to come, everlaſting reſt.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

Truſt in God.

ISAIAH. l. 10.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.

IT is ſaid of every real believer, that he walks by faith and not by ſight. If this is true, it will follow, that his faith muſt be expoſed to a variety of trials, while he continues in a world of ſenſe. Theſe trials ariſe from the ſtate of his own mind—from his outward condition—from the ſtate of the world with which he ſtands connected, and from the mutual influence of all theſe, one upon another. From this ſituation it is eaſy to ſee, that there are few duties, for the exerciſe of which a good man will have

greater or more frequent occaſion, than that of truſt and reliance upon God. Truſt is the duty and the refuge of the needy—of the dependent —of the weak—the timorous, and the diſtreſſed. How many are included under one or more of theſe characters; or rather, who is it that can ſay he is altogether excluded?

Agreeably to this, we need but open the ſacred volume, to perceive how frequent the exhortations are to truſt in God, and how many views are given us of his power, wiſdom, mercy and faithfulneſs, to encourage us to an unſhaken reliance. At the ſame time, I am ſorry to ſay, that there are few duties which are more imperfectly underſtood by many profeſſing Chriſtians. Even pious perſons often ſin both on the right hand and on the left, that is to ſay, both by diffidence and preſumption. I have, therefore, laid hold of this opportunity, and made choice of this paſſage of Scripture, in order to open and illuſtrate a little this important duty of a ſervant of God. How ſeaſonable it is you will eaſily perceive, for in the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper we have ſet before us Chriſt Jeſus, the unſpeakable gift of God—the great pledge of his love, and the great foundation of our reliance upon him, not only for his ſaving mercy in general, but for every neceſſary bleſſing in our way to eternal reſt.

This paſſage of Scripture is alſo well ſuited to the ſubject. It was ſpoken to the Jews in a lax

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and diſſolute age, when many had turned their backs upon the ſervice of God—had deſerted his ordinances, and deſpiſed his ſervants, which is always an occaſion both of affliction and temptation to his own children. This appears from the firſt words of the chapter. 'For thus ſaith the 'Lord, where is the bill of your mother's di-'vorcement, whom I have put away? And 'which of my creditors is it to whom I have ſold 'you? Behold, for your iniquities you have ſold 'yourſelves, and for your tranſgreſſions is your 'mother put away.' As alſo from the 3d and 4th verſes: 'I clothe the heavens with black-'neſs, and I make ſackcloth their covering. The 'Lord God hath given me the tongue of the 'learned, that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a 'word in ſeaſon to him that is weary.'

In diſcourſing further on this ſubject, it is propoſed, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace,

I. To open a little the character and ſtate of thoſe who are called upon, and exhorted to truſt in the name of the Lord.

II. To explain the duty of truſt, and point out the foundation of it.

III. To apply the ſubject for your inſtruction and comfort.

In the firſt place, then, I am to open a little the character and ſtate of thoſe who are here called

led upon, and exhorted to truſt in the name of the Lord.

Their deſcription is as follows: 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth 'the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the 'name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his 'God.' It will help us to enter into the ſpirit and meaning of the Prophet's words, if we keep in view the ſtate of the Jewiſh church, hinted at a little ago; 'who is among you;' that is, if there is one or more,—if there is a ſmall ſelect number in the midſt of general corruption and depravity, who have kept their garments unpolluted, though iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxeth cold, 'that feareth the Lord?' You know it is common in Scripture to deſcribe religion in general by ſome particular leading branch of it. The fear of God is often made uſe of for this purpoſe, as in that paſſage, there ſhall be no want to them that fear him. It may, therefore, ſignify thoſe who have a ſincere and unfeigned regard to the commandments of God, and have choſen him as their portion and hope. Thoſe who deſire and deſerve to be diſtinguiſhed from the profane deſpiſer,—the ſecure formaliſt, or the diſguiſed hypocrite. Thoſe, in a word, who are, and who deſire to appear, to uſe the ſtrong language of Scripture, upon the Lord's ſide in every ſtruggle, and who reſolve,

with

with Joſhua, that whatever others do, for their part they will ſerve the Lord.

But I cannot help thinking, we may alſo, with great ſafety, explain the words in a cloſer and ſtricter ſenſe, and ſuppoſe, that by fearing the Lord, is to be underſtood a due reverence for his infinite majeſty, and a humble veneration for his ſacred authority. This is a moſt excellent fence or guard to the conſcience in an evil time, and a noble preſervative from the ſpreading infection and inſinuating poiſon of prevailing or faſhionable ſins. It is alſo the uſual character of a diſſolute age to have caſt off fear, to treat the moſt ſacred things with ſcorn, and to look upon that holy ſolicitude to avoid ſin, which appears in the carriage and language of a child of God, as a mark of meanneſs or weakneſs of mind. In ſuch an age, one who fears God is well deſcribed by the prophet Iſaiah; 'But to this man will I 'look, even to him that is poor and of a con-'trite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.'

The next part of the character is, 'and obey-'eth the voice of his ſervant;' that is to ſay, is willing to hearken to the meſſage of God by the mouth of his ſervants. The words of the text, no doubt, may be conſidered as primarily referring to the inſpired Prophets, who bore an immediate commiſſion, miraculouſly atteſted from God. Many, even of theſe, were ſet at nought, their meſſage derided, and their perſons inſulted, when they attempted to ſtem the tide of prevailing vice,

or boldly denounced the divine vengeance againſt high-handed ſinners. But the ſincerely pious obeyed their voice. I ſhall make no ſcruple to apply this to ourſelves, and the preſent age. Our bleſſed Redeemer hath eſtabliſhed in his church a ſtanding miniſtry, and the regular adminiſtration of ordinances. And though we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, yet in no other way doth he now communicate his will, and vouch-ſafe his preſence to his people, but by the reading and hearing of his word, and attendance upon his inſtituted worſhip. It will, no doubt, therefore be a part of the character of a good man, that he will love the ordinances, and obey the voice of the ſervants of God; that he will conſider him who hath ſent them, and receive inſtruction, not as the word of man, but as it is in deed and in truth the word of God.

On the other hand, when iniquity prevails, when irreligion and profaneneſs lift up their heads, one of the moſt uſual concomitants and one of the ſureſt proofs of it is, a neglect of ordinances, and contempt of thoſe who are concerned in their adminiſtration: How far this is at preſent the caſe, I leave to yourſelves to judge. While I ſpeak this, my brethren, I do by no means deſire to ſee an ignorant people diſtracted by the gloomy terrors of ſuperſtition, or led blindfold by the enchanted cord of implicit faith. But ſure I am, there is an extreme on either hand, and thoſe who truly fear the Lord, will honour

honour the perſons, and obey the voice of ſuch as plead his cauſe and ſpeak in his name. You may reſt aſſured, that though they neither deſerve nor claim any authority on their own account, yet ſo long as they ſtand in the divine councils, and ſpeak the divine word, their meſſage will be attended with this awful ſanction, 'He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me, and he 'that deſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.'

The laſt part of the character here drawn, which lays the foundation for the ſubſequent direction is, 'that walketh in darkneſs, and hath 'no light.' Darkneſs and light, beſides their literal, have often a metaphorical ſenſe in Scripture. They are, indeed, uſed with a good deal of latitude and variety. But I think their metaphorical ſignification may be reduced to theſe two general heads. 1. Sometimes light ſignifies knowledge, and darkneſs ſignifies ignorance,—as in Eph. v. 8. 'Ye were ſometimes darkneſs, 'but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as 'children of light.' Acts xxvi. 18. 'To turn 'them from darkneſs unto light, and from the 'power of Satan unto God.' Job xxxvii. 19. 'Teach us what we ſhall ſay unto him; for we 'cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs.' 2. Sometimes darkneſs ſignifies diſtreſs or trouble, and the correſpondent ſignification of light is deliverance and joy; as 2. Sam. xxii. 28, 29. 'And 'the afflicted people thou wilt ſave; but thine 'eyes are upon the haughty, that thou mayeſt 'bring

'bring them down; for thou art my lamp, O 'Lord; and the Lord will lighten my darkneſs.' Job xix. 8. 'He hath fenced up my way that I 'cannot paſs; he hath put darkneſs in my paths.' Pſ. xcvii. 11. 'Light is ſown for the righteous, 'and gladneſs for the upright in heart.' Eſther viii. 16. 'And the Jews had light and gladneſs, 'and joy and honour.'

None of theſe ſenſes is to be excluded in the paſſage before us. Believers may walk in darkneſs, when ignorant or uncertain as to what nearly concerns them, as well as under diſtreſs and trouble. They have alſo a mutual influence upon, produce, and are produced by one another. For illuſtrating this a little more particularly, obſerve, that a good man may walk in darkneſs; 1. When he is in doubt or uncertainty as to his intereſt in the divine favour. 2. When he is under the preſſure of outward calamity. 3. When the ſtate of the church is ſuch, that he cannot underſtand or explain, in a ſatisfying manner, the courſe of divine providence. Theſe particulars I have it not in view to enlarge much upon, but only to explain them ſo far as is neceſſary to lay a foundation for what ſhall be afterwards offered on the duty to truſt in God.

1. Then, a good man may walk in darkneſs when he is in doubt or uncertainty as to his intereſt in the Divine favour. I apprehend that ſome meaſure of hope in God's mercy is eſſential to true piety, and not only the right, but the poſſeſ-

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ſion of every child of God. Faith and deſpair are beyond all queſtion inconſiſtent. Faith and hope are inſeparable. Yet certainly the excellent ones of the earth may be ſometimes involved in great perplexity and doubt. This is plain from ſcripture examples, from daily experience, and from the nature and reaſon of the thing. How violent a ſtruggle do we often find the Pſalmiſt David in, between hope and fear? 'O my God, 'my ſoul is caſt down in me; therefore will I re-'member thee from the land of Jordan, and of 'the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.' How many do we ſee every day under a ſpirit of bondage, who, though they ſtill cleave to God as their portion, yet are often full of fears, and ſeldom dare confidently affirm their intereſt in, or relation to him! And indeed how can it be otherwiſe? While we are here, our ſanctification is but imperfect; and, alas! with regard to many, it is often hard to determine, whether we ſhould not write upon it, 'Mene tekel,' as eſſentially defective.

Sin ſeparates between God and his people, and cauſes him to hide his face from them. Nay, ſometimes, though there be no particular or provoking crime, as the cauſe of his controverſy with them, he may withdraw from them the light of his countenance, to exerciſe their vigilance, or to try their patience. I know, my brethren, that the diſtreſs of ſerious ſouls, when mourning after an abſent or an angry God, crying to him in ſecret,

and following hard after him in his ordinances, is by many treated with the highest degree of contempt. But, surely, if peace of mind from a well founded hope of the Divine favour, is the greatest of all present blessings; and if this, from the variableness of our own conduct, is sometimes more, sometimes less strong, and sometimes wholly suspended; when this last is the case, it must occasion inexpressible concern, and there can be no greater evidence of irreligion and impiety than to call it in question.

2. A good man may walk in darkness when under the pressure of outward calamity. This, in a real believer, is never wholly separated from the former. Even in itself, indeed, no affliction for the present is joyous but grievous. The disorders of this feeble frame, poverty, and straitness of provision, unjust slander and reproach, must be deeply and sensibly felt by every good man, even as he is a man. To this may be added, the loss of relations, and concern for the sufferings of others of every kind, which is always most distressing to the best and tenderest spirits. But outward calamities by those that fear God, are felt most sensibly when they are considered as the rod of his anger, and bring sin to remembrance. When he visits his own children with any of his sore judgments: when he follows them with breach upon breach, they are ready to say, 'Surely he is setting me up as a mark for his arrows, 'he is counting me his enemy.'—They are often

ten at a loſs to underſtand the cauſe of his controverſy with them; and they alſo find it often extremely difficult to bring their minds to a patient and ſubmiſſive reſignation to his holy will. To thoſe who know their duty, and deſire, through Divine grace, to comply with it, it is no ſmall difficulty to be obliged to ſtruggle with a riſing and rebellious heart within, as well as ſuffering from without, and to be alternately calling in queſtion the certainty, either of the love of God to them, or of their love to him.

3. A good man may ſometimes walk in darkneſs from the aſpect of Providence, and the ſtate of the Redeemer's kingdom. The works of God are ſought out of them who have pleaſure in them. But when they are not able to penetrate the depths of the Divine counſels, this becomes often a ſource both of diſtreſs and temptation. When wicked men are ſuffered to proſper at their will; —when the good are oppreſſed by the power and tyranny, or perſecuted by the malice of their enemies;—when the moſt generous attempts for the revival of truth and righteouſneſs are rendered abortive;—when the profeſſing ſervants of God are divided into parties, or marſhalled under names, and their zeal made to ſpend itſelf in unneceſſary, ſinful and hurtful contentions;—when offences come, and thoſe of the higheſt profeſſion or attainments are ſuffered to fall into groſs crimes, by which the mouths of enemies are opened to blaſpheme; then may, and muſt we adopt

the words of the Pſalmiſt,—Pſ. lxxiii. 10.—14. 'Therefore, his people return hither; and waters of a full cup are wrung out unto them: And they ſay, how doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Moſt High? Behold, theſe are the ungodly who proſper in the world; they increaſe in riches. Verily, I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning.'

I proceed now to the ſecond and chief thing propoſed from this paſſage, which was to explain the duty of truſt in God, and to point out its foundation.

Truſt, in the moſt general view we can take of it, may be thus explained. It is a reliance or confidence in God, that however diſcouraging appearances may be for the preſent time, yet, by his power and wiſdom, our deſires and expectation ſhall take place, whether as to deliverance from trouble, or the obtaining of future bleſſings. When we can attain this happy frame of ſpirit, it is an inconceivable relief and eaſe to the mind under ſuffering, and is excellently expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt,—Pſ. lv. 22. Caſt thy burden upon the Lord, and he ſhall ſuſtain thee, he ſhall never ſuffer the righteous to be moved. Let us then endeavour to explain the grounds of this as diſtinctly as poſſible. And God grant that it may be done not only in a clear, but in a ſolid and

and ſatisfying manner, ſo as to aſſiſt you in the practice of real and vital religion.

I have already ſaid, that our expectation is from the power and wiſdom of God. May we then reaſonably expect, is it our duty to believe that we ſhall receive all that we deſire, and that is within the reach of Divine power and wiſdom? Theſe have no bounds at all. We know that nothing is too hard for the Almighty. He doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. This ſuggeſts to us, that there is ſomething more neceſſary, in order to lay a proper foundation for truſt, viz. his goodneſs to make our expectation probable, and his promiſe to make it certain. Even created beings can often do what they will not. This holds particularly with regard to God, whoſe power is directed in its exerciſe by his goodneſs, and limited by his wiſdom. His goodneſs, in general, encourages us to go to him with a peradventure, or who can tell whether he may not be gracious? But in order to make our truſt both diſtinct and ſtrong, we muſt go to his promiſe, 'for he is faithful and keepeth covenant and 'truth for ever.' Truſt then, my brethren, reſts ultimately on the promiſe. It muſt be preciſely commenſurate, or of the ſame extent with the promiſe. Whoever doubts or calls in queſtion the certainty of what God hath promiſed, is chargeable with diſtruſt; and whoever expects to receive, in kind or degree, more than he has

promiſed is ſo far guilty of preſumption. This is the general rule, and I think it carries ſuch evidence with it, that every one muſt be ſenſible it is juſt, who hath heard it with any meaſure of attention.

But the great difficulty yet remains, which is, to apply this rule to the various cares that occur in the ſpiritual life, and to tell any particular perſon what it is his duty firmly to believe, and hope he ſhall receive from God, and what it would be preſumptuous and ſimple in him to fix his expectation on. This is plainly of the greater importance, that the more particular our truſt is, as to the object of deſire, it is the more powerful a ſupport to the mind. At the ſame time it frequently happens, that the more particular our deſires are formed, the foundation of our hope appears the more uncertain and queſtionable. On this account you may obſerve, that it is of the greateſt moment to underſtand the nature and tenor of the promiſes; or rather, indeed, to explain the foundation of truſt, and to explain the nature and tenor of the promiſes, is one and the ſame thing.

For this end, it may be proper to diſtinguiſh the promiſes of God, as to futurity, into two heads, abſolute and conditional. By abſolute promiſes, in this place, I underſtand only thoſe that are ſo in the moſt unlimited ſenſe, that is to ſay, revealed as a part of the fixed plan of Providence, ſuſpended on no terms but what all, of every character, may expect will certainly come to

to paſs. Such are the promiſes after the flood; 'that ſummer and winter, ſeed time and harveſt, 'ſhould not fail;—the coming of Chriſt in the 'fleſh at the fulneſs of time,' to the ancient Patriarchs, and to us;—'the downfall of Antichriſt; '—the preſervation of a church on earth,' let its enemies be or do what they will;—'the calling of God's ancient people the Jews, and the 'coming of Chriſt to judge the world at the laſt 'day.' Theſe are all called promiſes in Scripture, and ſo far as they can be of any uſe to the people of God, either for direction in duty, or reſtraint from ſin, or conſolation under trial, they are to be depended on, in the moſt abſolute manner, for they reſt upon the certainty of the Holy Scriptures, and the truth of the unchangeable God, who 'is not a man that he ſhould lie, nor 'the ſon of man that he ſhould repent.'

SERMON

SERMON IX.

Truſt in God.

ISAIAH l. 10.

Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his ſervant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light? let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.

HAVING, in the former diſcourſe, opened the character and ſtate of thoſe who are called upon, and exhorted to truſt in the name of the Lord; and entered upon the ſecond thing propoſed; which was, to explain the duty of truſt in God, and to point out its foundation; and having in this view conſidered the nature of abſolute promiſes;—I proceed,

2. To conſider the nature and uſe of conditional promiſes. Theſe I am obliged, for greater diſtinctneſs,

diſtinctneſs, to divide into three different heads. —1. There are promiſes made to perſons of ſuch or ſuch a character, or in ſuch or ſuch a ſtate.—2. There are promiſes, the performance of which is ſuſpended on our compliance with ſomething previouſly required, as the condition of obtaining them.—3. There are promiſes, not only ſuſpended on both the preceding terms, but upon the ſuppoſition of ſome circumſtances in themſelves uncertain, or to us unknown. Let us conſider each of theſe with care and attention.

1. There are promiſes made to perſons of ſuch or ſuch a character, or in ſuch or ſuch a ſtate, which are therefore to be applied and reſted on, according as the evidence of our being of this character, or in this ſtate, is clear or obſcure. In this I have particularly in view, the bleſſings of ſalvation, the pardon of ſin, peace with God, the ſpirit of ſanctification, and a right to everlaſting life. Theſe all lie in an unbroken chain, and inſeparable connection, and might have been more briefly expreſſed, by an intereſt in Chriſt the Saviour, who is the author, ſource and ſum of theſe bleſſings; 'for all the promiſes 'of God in him, are yea, and in him Amen, 'to the glory of God by us.' Let no judicious, attentive hearer be ſurpriſed or diſſatisfied, that I have ranked theſe among conditional promiſes; for you may obſerve that I have expreſſed myſelf thus, they are promiſes made to perſons of ſuch or ſuch a character, or in ſuch or ſuch a ſtate.

ſtate. In this, they certainly differ from the promiſes properly abſolute, mentioned above. It is far from my intention to do injury to that fundamental truth, that ſalvation is by grace. I eſteem that doctrine which proceeds upon a ſelf-righteous ſyſtem, to be contrary to the word of God, and moſt pernicious to the ſouls of men. There is nothing at all required in Scripture to be performed by us, as a purchaſing or meriting condition. Every gracious act of the divine government, in our favour, is the fruit of the Redeemer's purchaſe, and every holy diſpoſition wrought in us is the effect of his Almighty grace. But it is certain at the ſame time, that in order to our accepting thoſe bleſſings, we muſt be truly and deeply humbled, and ſee ourſelves to be incapable and helpleſs. We muſt be unfeignedly willing to renounce all claim of merit, and accept of ſalvation as it is offered in the Goſpel; that is, in its full extent, and in the free and ſovereign manner of its communication. So far, ſurely, we muſt ſay, the promiſes of the Goſpel are conditional, or wholly pervert the word of God. I know of no promiſes then to the unbelieving and impenitent, unleſs you call that a promiſe, that they ſhall have 'their portion in the lake of 'fire that burneth with brimſtone; and that the 'ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever 'and ever.'

Hear it, my dear brethren; it is the 'needy, 'thirſty, ſenſible ſoul, that is invited to come and

find

find reſt. 'Ho! every one that thirſteth, come 'ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; 'come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and 'milk without money and without price. Come 'unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, 'and I will give you reſt.' If any ſhall think fit further to ſay, that the very deſtination of the veſſels of mercy, is of God's ſovereign pleaſure, that conviction itſelf is by a day of his power, and that faith which intereſts us in Chriſt's righteouſneſs is his gift: I agree to the whole, but obſerve, that it is improperly introduced here. No uſe can poſſibly be made of the divine decree in the application of the promiſes. It is inverting the order of things. Can any man ſay, I truſt in the mercy of God, becauſe I have been ordained to everlaſting life? No man can derive comfort from this, till by his effectual calling it is publiſhed, and begins to be accompliſhed; and then he may look back with wonder and gratitude to that everlaſting love, by which he was choſen in Chriſt before the foundation of the world. Can you judge of the fruit of a tree by looking upon the root? No, but you judge of the ſtrength and deepneſs of the root, by the fulneſs of the fruit, and the vigour and verdure of the branches. From an improper mixture of what belongs to the ſecret will of God, and what belongs to us, as our duty, much error and confuſion ariſes.

Now, my brethren, as to the application of theſe

theſe promiſes of pardon and peace, the humbled ſinner, the man among us, who walketh in darkneſs and hath no light,—who is burdened with a ſenſe of guilt, and diſcouraged by the threatenings of the law, the accuſations of conſcience, and the pure and holy nature of God,—who, perhaps has all this aggravated by diſtreſs and trouble, is called to truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God. He is invited to conſider and reſt on the extent of the call, the immutability of the promiſe, and the riches of divine grace. If he is ſo far from pleading any merit in himſelf, or being diſſatisfied with the plan of ſalvation laid down in the Goſpel, that he is making every thing an argument againſt himſelf, and dare not lay hold of, or appropriate ſo unſpeakable a mercy: this is juſt the effect of diſtruſt, and he is called, in the ſtrongeſt manner, in the text, to 'truſt in the name 'of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.' With how many gracious aſſurances for this purpoſe is the Scripture filled! John vi. 37, 'All that the 'Father hath given me ſhall come to me, and 'him that cometh unto me I will in no wiſe caſt 'out.' Heb. vii. 25. 'Wherefore he is able 'alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come to 'God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make in'terceſſion for them.' Rev. xxii. 17. 'And 'the Spirit and the bride ſay, come, And let 'him that heareth ſay, come. And let him 'that is athirſt come. And whoſoever will, let

'him

'him take of the water of life freely.' All things, Chriſt excepted, are to be renounced to the all-ſufficiency of a Redeemer, to be the foundation of our hope. The penitent will ſay with the Apoſtle, Phil. iii. 8. 'Yea doubtleſs, and 'I count all things but loſs for the excellency of 'the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus, my Lord: for 'whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and 'do count them but dung, that I may win 'Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine 'own righteouſneſs which is of the law, but 'that which is through the faith of Chriſt, even 'the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith.'

2. There is a ſecond claſs of promiſes, the performance of which is ſuſpended on our previous compliance with ſomething required as the condition of obtaining them. In theſe we are not only called 'to accept of the divine mercy, 'but commanded to obey the Divine will.' The order in which I have placed theſe, will, I hope, prevent you from miſunderſtanding or miſapplying what may be ſaid on them. This claſs includes all the promiſes in Scripture, regarding the daily progreſs of a believer in his ſanctification and conformity to God, as well as the increaſe of his comfort and peace. I am ſenſible, that as the reconciliation of a ſinner to God, and his right to what is called in Scripture the promiſe of eternal life, is of free and unmerited mercy, ſo, no doubt, all the inferior or ſubordinate promiſes flow from the ſame ſource, nay,

in a certain meaſure, they are entirely upon the ſame footing with thoſe formerly mentioned; that is to ſay, final perſeverance, real growth in the ſpiritual life, and neceſſary comfort, are the ſure and purchaſed portion of every one that is born of God. Rom. viii. 29. 'For whom he 'did foreknow, he alſo did predeſtinate to be 'conformed to the image of his Son, that he 'might be the firſt-born among many brethren.' But in the diſtribution of thoſe gifts, particularly in their meaſure, there is not only an unknown regard to the good pleaſure of God, but a known and eſtabliſhed regard to our conduct in duty. Thus the abundant ſupply of the Spirit is the fruit and return of diligence in prayer. Matt. vii. 7. 'Aſk and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and 'ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened un-'to you.' See alſo Ezekiel xxxvi. 25. compared with the 37. 'Then will I ſprinkle clean water 'upon you, and ye ſhall be clean from all your 'filthineſs; and from all your idols will I cleanſe 'you, &c. Thus ſaith the Lord, yet for all this 'will I be enquired of by the houſe of Iſrael to 'do it for them.' Thus alſo inward conſolation, as well as outward ſecurity, is expreſsly promiſed as the effect and reward of uniformity and diligence in duty. Iſa. xxxii. 17. 'And the work 'of righteouſneſs, ſhall be peace, and the effect 'of righteouſneſs, quietneſs, and aſſurance for 'ever.' As the counter part and illuſtration of this, you ſee, that a departure from the path of

duty

duty brings on the threatened, or, perhaps, I ought to call it, the promiſed rod of correction; Pſ. lxxxix. 30.—33. 'But if his children ſhal 'forſake my law, and not walk in my judgments; 'if they break my ſtatutes, and keep not my 'commandments; then will I viſit their tranſ-'greſſions with a rod, and their iniquities with 'ſtripes. Nevertheleſs, my loving kindneſs will 'I not take from him, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs 'to fail.' In the ſame manner, Iſa. xl. 30, 31. 'Even the youths ſhall faint and be weary, and 'the young men ſhall utterly fail: but they that 'wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength; 'they ſhall mount up with wings as eagles; they 'ſhall run and not be weary; —they ſhall walk 'and not faint.' Agreeably to all this, you know, our bleſſed Lord preſcribed watchfulneſs and prayer as the great preſervatives againſt temptation, and whoever expects either ſpiritual ſtrength or comfort, while he relaxes his diligence in the way of duty, is guilty of that ſin, which is called in Scripture, tempting God; and ſhall aſſuredly meet with a dreadful diſappointment.

My brethren, as much of the daily exerciſe of real believers regards their progreſs in ſanctification, and their peace and comfort, it is proper that you ſhould carefully attend to the tenor of theſe promiſes, and to what ought to be your reliance upon them. I ſhall ſum up, in a few

particulars, what I apprehend to be of moſt importance.

1. Truſt in theſe promiſes implies ſelf-denial, and a deep ſenſe of your own weakneſs. Theſe promiſes would be unneceſſary and ſuperfluous, were we not inſufficient of ourſelves for any thing that is good. Truſt in God ſtands directly oppoſed to all ſelf-dependence. Prov. iii. 5. 'Truſt 'in the lord with all thine heart, and lean not 'to thine own underſtanding.' How jealous God is, if I may ſpeak ſo, of the honour that is due to him in this reſpect, may be ſeen from the many foul and ſhameful crimes into which he permitted ſome of his beſt ſaints to fall, when they were off their guard, by ſloth, or ſtill more provoked him by pride and preſumption; Noah's drunkenneſs, Moſes's paſſion, David's adultery and murder, and Peter's denial of his maſter. 1 Cor. x. 11, 12. 'Now all theſe things hap-'pened unto them for enſamples, and they are 'written for our admonition, upon whom the 'ends of the world are come. Wherefore, let 'him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt 'he fall.' For this reaſon the Apoſtle Paul ſays, with great propriety, and with great force, which is equally applicable to himſelf and other believers, a ſeeming paradox; 1 Cor. xii. 10. 'For when I am weak, then I am ſtrong.'

1. As we are to put no truſt in ourſelves, ſo we are to exerciſe the moſt unſhaken confidence of our being able to diſcharge any duty, or undergo

dergo any trial by the help of the Almighty.—Oh! how ready are we to ſin on both hands! How often do we preſume upon our own ſtrength, and forget the neceſſity of applying for divine aid!—And on the other hand, how prone are we to timidity or deſpondence in difficult caſes! When corruptions have long kept their ground, we are ready to dread their influence, and to make but little out of the promiſes in Scripture, that we ſhall be made 'more than conquerors 'through him that loved us.' We have learned, by ſad experience, that in us dwelleth no good thing, and yet it is long before we will attend to the leſſon that follows hard upon it, 'my grace is ſufficient for thee, and my ſtrength 'ſhall be made perfect in weakneſs.'

3. As theſe promiſes are expreſsly made to the diligent, you muſt ſtill remember that your own attention and application to duty is eſſentially neceſſary, and that the aſſiſtance promiſed from on high, is always repreſented in Scripture as an argument and encouragement to diligence, and not a warrant or excuſe for ſloth. Philip. ii. 12. 'Work out your own ſalvation with fear 'and trembling, for it is God that worketh in 'you both to will and to do of his good pleaſure.' It is alſo well worthy of notice, that the ſame Prophet Ezekiel, who ſays, chap. xxxvi. 6. 'A new heart alſo will I give you, and a new 'ſpirit will I put within you,' changes the form of his expreſſion; and in another place, chap.

xviii. 31, 32. ſpeaks in the following terms: 'Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions 'whereby ye have tranſgreſſed; and make you 'a new heart and a new ſpirit: for why will ye 'die, O houſe of Iſrael? For I have no pleaſure 'in the death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord 'God; wherefore turn yourſelves, and live ye.' In conſequence of this,

4. In the laſt place, truſt in God will make us ready to acknowledge, that when we fail in duty, when we forget or break our reſolutions, the fault is certainly in ourſelves. It is impoſſible to excuſe or juſtify ourſelves in any degree, without laying the blame, in the ſame proportion, upon God, and calling in queſtion his faithfulneſs and truth. But whatever our treacherous hearts may ſinfully ſuggeſt, we are not ſtraitened in God, but ſtraitened in our own bowels. We find him pleading his own cauſe, in this reſpect, in many paſſages of Scripture, Iſa. lix. 1. 'Behold, the 'Lord's hand is not ſhortened, that it cannot 'ſave; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot 'hear; but your ſins have ſeparated between 'you and your God, and your iniquities have 'hid his face from you, that he will not hear'. Upon the whole, truſt in theſe promiſes is no other than an humble and diligent application to duty, under a deep ſenſe of weakneſs, and dependence on promiſed ſtrength, accompanied with a firm perſuaſion, that 'in the name of the 'Lord we ſhall tread down our enemies,' and

go

go on from ſtrength to ſtrength, 'till we appear 'before God in Zion.'

3. Another claſs of promiſes are thoſe that are ſuſpended, not only on the ſame conditions with the two former, but upon ſome other circumſtances in themſelves uncertain, or to us unſeen. Theſe are temporal mercies, or rather temporal proſperity, deliverance from preſent diſtreſs, and abundance or affluence of outward enjoyments. Perhaps we may alſo add ſpiritual conſolation, and ſenſible joy in God. I find no temporal promiſe preciſely fixed to the ſervant of God but this: 'Bread ſhall be given him, and 'his water ſhall be ſure;' and it is certainly his duty, in the moſt ſtraitening circumſtances, to maintain a confident dependence on the power and wiſdom of Providence for neceſſary ſupply. I do not condemn thoſe who, when reduced to extremity, have actually pleaded this divine promiſe, and againſt hope, have believed in hope; and I am perſuaded inſtances have not been wanting of relief, furniſhed in a manner next to miraculous. But as to every other degree of temporal proſperity, God hath reſerved it in his own hand to give or withhold it at his pleaſure; that is, as he ſees it will be moſt for his glory, and the benefit of his people. It is lawful then, my brethren, for you to endeavour to procure, by honeſt induſtry, the increaſe of your ſubſtance, to look well to the ſtate of your flocks, and your herds, and to aſk by prayer the bleſſing

ſing of God upon your labours. It is lawful, and it is your duty by regularity and care, to preſerve life and health, as well as to aſk of the Father of your ſpirits, recovery from ſickneſs, or deliverance from any other kind of diſtreſs. But you are not warranted to believe that theſe petitions ſhall be granted in hand, or in your own time and meaſure, even though you aſk them in ſincerity with the prayer of faith. There may be reaſons for withholding them, and yet you may be accepted in your prayers. An infinitely wiſe God knows beſt what is for your good, and he only hath a right to determine in what part of his own ſervice; where and how long he ſhall employ you. Truſt in God, therefore, in this reſpect, implies a careful attention to the tenor of the promiſes with regard to temporal mercies, and not to look for, or even, if poſſible, deſire what he hath not promiſed to beſtow.

If I am not miſtaken, we ſhall find it of moment, upon this ſubject, to obſerve, both what he hath not and what he hath certainly promiſed. He has no where promiſed that his own people ſhall be the richeſt or the greateſt on earth; but he hath certainly promiſed to bleſs their proviſion, and aſſured them, that a little that a juſt man hath ſhall be better than the riches of many wicked. He has not promiſed that they ſhall be free from ſuffering; but he hath certainly promiſed to ſupport them by his own preſence under their diſtreſs. Iſa. xliii. 2. 'When 'thou

'thou passest through the waters, I will be with 'thee; and through the rivers, they shall not 'overflow thee; when thou walkest through the 'fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the 'flame kindle upon thee.' The truth is, he hath promised that 'all things shall work together for 'their good'. In one word, they have indeed all mercies promised, only they themselves are not in a condition, at present, to judge what they may use with safety, and what not. As the heir of an opulent estate, though he is proprietor of all, yet is laid under restraint while in infancy and nonage, because he would soon ruin himself if it were committed to his own management; so the believer, though an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ, yet till he is meet for the inheritance, he must be at his Maker's and Redeemer's disposal. Take in, therefore, only this limitation, and then see his extensive charter. 1 Cor. iii. 21.—'For all things are yours; whe-'ther Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, 'or life, or death, or things present, or things to 'come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and 'Christ is God's.' What then is the duty of a child to God? It is to breathe after more and more submission to the divine will, and to annex this reservation to every petition of a temporal nature, 'nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.' And, oh! my brethren, how happy the person who hath seen the weakness of human judgment; who waits the intimation of God's will, before he will

will ſuffer his deſires to faſten with eagerneſs on any earthly comfort, and who endeavours to keep himſelf free from perplexity, by an humble and ſubmiſſive reliance on the all-ſufficiency of God!

I obſerved, in entering on this part of the ſubject, that ſpiritual conſolation, or ſenſible joy in God, is to be conſidered as a promiſe of the ſame claſs, which muſt, therefore, be aſked with ſubmiſſion, and is diſpenſed according to the good pleaſure of a gracious but ſovereign God. I am ſenſible, as has been formerly obſerved with another view, that ſome degree of comfort neceſſarily follows from a believer's relation to God; but many pious perſons ſeem to deſire and to expect ſenſible comfort in a higher meaſure than God ſees it meet to give them, or than is proper for them in the preſent ſtate. It is with ſpiritual proſperity as with temporal, every one cannot bear it. Therefore, it is our duty ſtill to be ſenſible that we have much more comfort and peace than we deſerve, and as we deſire and ſtrive for greater degrees of it, to accompany theſe deſires with much humility and reſignation to the will of God.

I proceed now to the laſt thing propoſed, which was to make a practical application of this ſubject for your inſtruction and direction.

1. From what has been ſaid, you may ſee what judgment you ought to form of inward ſuggeſtions, and ſtrong or particular impreſſions upon your minds. There are ſome extremely prone to interpret

interpret a text of scripture, suddenly suggested to their minds, or any strong impression made on them, as an immediate message from God, to be directly applied to themselves: Others, in opposition to this, as enthusiastical and visionary, seem to give up every expectation of being able to say, with the Psalmist, 'I bless the Lord who hath 'given me counsel, my reins also instruct me in 'the night season.' I beg, therefore, that you may observe, that the suggestion of a passage of scripture, of itself gives no title to the immediate application of it, because the great deceiver may undoubtedly suggest scripture, as we find he could reason from it in our Saviour's temptation. We are, in every such case, to consider the tenor of it, if it be a promise of encouragement, that is, how and in what manner it may be safely applied. If any thing happens to be suggested that expressly suits our present condition, either by setting home the obligation of duty, with particular evidence upon the conscience, or pointing out the grounds of comfort, it ought to be thankfully acknowledged as from the spirit of God. For example, if a person, under the power of a spirit of bondage, and fear of Divine wrath, hath suggested to him any of the extensive gracious assurances of mercy to the chief of sinners, it is his duty to lay hold of it. It is directly suited to his condition, and would be the very thing that a wise and judicious pastor would recommend to him for his relief. He may therefore without

without heſitation, bleſs God for it, if it is brought with power and efficacy upon his heart. In the ſame manner, if a perſon under trouble hath ſuggeſted to him any of the promiſes of ſupport under it, ſurely he ought, in the diſcharge of his duty, firmly to rely on the accompliſhment of that part of the word of God. But in the reflex examination of a perſon's character or ſtate to apply the ſudden ſuggeſtion of a promiſe or privilege, perhaps of a conditional nature, is certainly both ſinful and dangerous. Sinful, becauſe without warrant; and dangerous, becauſe leading to deluſion.

2. From what hath been ſaid, you may ſee what it is that we ought to ſeek for with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and may hope to obtain with the greateſt confidence. Recollect, I beſeech you, the order in which I have mentioned the promiſes of God as the objects of truſt and reliance. Firſt of all the promiſes of ſalvation, deliverance from the guilt of ſin, and a right to everlaſting life; next, whatever is neceſſary to the preſervation and improvement of the ſpiritual life; and then, in the third place, proper accommodation, and ſuitable proviſion in our paſſage through the preſent world. They are here ranked according to their value in themſelves, and the value which we ſhould put upon them. Let us, therefore, take care that we never violate this order, which is neceſſary, not only becauſe of their comparative value, but becauſe of their mutual

tual influence one upon another. It is in vain for us to expect to attain to the habit or practice of holineſs, till we are united to God by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. All the promiſes of the goſpel are ratified in him. All the divine fulneſs is treaſured up in him. Every divine gift is diſpenſed by him. Therefore, he ſays, John xv. 4. Abide in 'me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear 'fruit of itſelf, except it abide in the vine; no 'more can ye, except ye abide in me.' And the Apoſtle Paul, Gal. ii. 20. 'I am crucified with 'Chriſt; nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but 'Chriſt liveth in me; and the life which I now 'live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son 'of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for 'me.'

In the ſame manner nothing can be more prepoſterous, than to fix our affections upon temporal mercies, or our attention upon the promiſes that relate to them, ſo as to loſe view of our intereſt in God's favour, and the progreſs of our ſanctification. All the temporal promiſes in ſcripture are made to the children of God as ſuch, and for carrying on the purpoſes of his grace in them. Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of theſe things. There is no promiſe in the whole volume of inſpiration to the wicked and impenitent. 'There is no peace, ſaith my God, 'to the wicked.' He will either rebuke them in his wrath and chaſten them in his hot diſpleaſure, or give them up to a curſed, hardening, ſtupify-

ing prosperity, than which, no state on earth is more to be dreaded.—Christian! never suffer an anxiety about your outward state to supplant or go before, or even to be separated from a concern, that you may not be found wanting when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary.

3. Let me beseech you to adore the wisdom, justice and mercy of God, in the order he hath established, according to the different nature of the promises. That which is of most, nay, properly speaking, of unspeakable value, and radically contains all the rest, is placed first in order, and offered in the most free and gracious manner, without money and without price. Salvation is preached to the chief of sinners, and a Saviour held forth as able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. Many uses might be made of this, but the single use I intend to make of it at present, as connected with the duty of trust, is to silence the complaints of envy and impatience. How prone are many to look with an evil eye upon the more extensive possessions, and greater apparent outward comfort which others enjoy! Does it not astonish you to think how much unbelief and ingratitude there is in those repining thoughts? Meanness of rank, and poverty of state, are no hindrance at all to an interest in Christ, and a right to everlasting life. Nay, the Gospel is preached to the poor.—Many a Lazarus has been carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, while the rich and luxurious have lifted

up

up their eyes in torments. Will you, can you, dare you then complain? Will you envy the man of the world, his stately palace, his elegant furniture, and his sumptuous fare? What is the amplest portion in the present life compared with the sure mercies of David? What child of God would exchange with any wicked man a prison for a palace, or a scaffold for a throne?

I beseech you to add to all this, that even with regard to poor no peace or comfort, there is no comparison between a good man and a bad. 'A 'man's life doth not consist in the abundance of 'the things which he possesses.' This is a truth not only often repeated in the sacred oracles, but written in the clearest and most legible characters in the history of Providence.—Nay, even independently of virtue or religion itself, every human calamity, whether arising from sickness, reproach, contention, fear, or ungratified desire, rages with greater violence in the higher, than in the lower stations of life. A vain and conceited monarch once sent to ask an heathen oracle, who was the happiest man on earth? and met with a deserved disappointment in the reply. If we should put a question much more profitable as well as much more easily resolved, in what rank of life the most exquisite human misery has been found? I have no doubt but it ought to be answered, upon a throne.—Experience will always ratify the wise man's observation: 'Better is a dinner of 'herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred

'therewith.' A ſanctified lot is an ineſtimable treaſure. The bleſſing of God on a cruiſe of oil, and a pot of meal, is better than inexhauſtible mines of gold and ſilver. What cauſe of contentment and patience to the child of God!

In the laſt place, you may learn, from what has been ſaid on the ſubject, what is the plaineſt, the ſhorteſt, and, indeed, the only ſure way to deliverance from diſtreſs or calamity of whatever kind. It is to fly to the mercy of God through the blood of Chriſt, to renew the exerciſes of faith in him, and in proportion as it pleaſes God, to fill you with all joy and peace in believing; you will perceive every other covenant bleſſing flow clear and unmixed from this inexhauſted ſource. It will lead to repentance, humiliation and ſubmiſſion. The ſanctified uſe of the affliction will be obtained, and this brings deliverance of itſelf; for no rod will be continued longer than it hath anſwered its end. At any rate, when ſuffering is neceſſary, grace to ſuffer with patience, ſhall not be withheld. Would you have any more, and is not this remedy always at hand? Can the pooreſt man ſay, it is not within the reach of his purſe? It is at once effectual and univerſal. It was once ſaid in contempt of a worthy and pious miniſter, that he made ſo much of the blood of Chriſt, that he would even apply it to a broken bone. But bating what may be thought indecent in the expreſſion, choſen on purpoſe to bring a good man into ridicule, the thing itſelf, I make bold to affirm

firm, is a great and precious truth. Faith in the blood of Chriſt makes a man ſuperior to all ſufferings. It ſoftens their aſpect—it abates their ſeverity—nay, it changes their nature. When a man is under diſtreſs or calamity of any kind, and conſiders it only in itſelf, and independently of his relation to God, it retains its old nature, and taſtes with all the bitterneſs of the original curſe; but when it is conſidered as limited in its nature—its meaſure, and its continuance by a kind Saviour, the believer ſubmits to it with patience, as a part of his Creator's will; bears it with patience in his Redeemer's ſtrength, and ſometimes is enabled to embrace it with pleaſure, as ſerving to carry him to his Father's preſence. Is this going too far? No, my dear brethren; there are great realities to which the word of God, and the experience of his ſaints, bear united evidence. Many here preſent, I doubt not, have been witneſs of this truth in the carriage of their relations now with God; and not a few, I truſt, will repeat the teſtimony to ſucceeding ages. I conclude all with that animated paſſage of the Apoſtle Paul,—'2 Cor. iv. 16. 17. 'For which cauſe we faint not; but though 'our outward man periſh, yet the inward man is 'renewed day by day. For our light affliction, 'which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far 'more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

SERMON X.

The Dominion of Providence over the Paſſions of Men.*

PSAL. lxxvi. 10.

Surely the wrath of Man ſhall praiſe thee; the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.

THERE is not a greater evidence either of the reality or the power of religion, than a firm belief of God's univerſal preſence, and a conſtant attention to the influence and operation of his providence. It is by this means that the Chriſtian may be ſaid, in the emphatical Scripture language, 'to walk with God, and to endure as ſeeing him who is inviſible.'

The doctrine of divine providence is very full and complete in the ſacred oracles. It extends not only to things which we may think of great moment, and therefore worthy of notice; but to things

* Preached at Princeton on the general Faſt, 17th May 1776.

things the moſt indifferent and inconſiderable ' Are not two ſparrows ſold for a farthing ?' ſays our Lord, ' and one of them falleth not to the ' ground without your heavenly Father ; nay, ' the very hairs of your head are all numbered.' It extends not only to things beneficial and ſalutary, or to the direction and aſſiſtance of thoſe who are the ſervants of the living God ; but to things ſeemingly moſt hurtful and deſtructive, and to perſons the moſt refractory and diſobedient. He over-rules all his creatures, and all their actions. Thus we are told, that ' fire, hail, ſnow, vapour, and ſtormy wind, fulfil his word,' in the courſe of nature ; and even ſo the moſt impetuous and diſorderly paſſions of men, that are under no reſtraint from themſelves, are yet perfectly ſubject to the dominion of Jehovah. They carry his commiſſion, they obey his orders, they are limited and reſtrained by his authority, and they conſpire with every thing elſe in promoting his glory. There is the greater need to take notice of this, that men are not generally ſufficiently aware of the diſtinction between the law of God and his purpoſe ; they are apt to ſuppoſe, that as the temper of the ſinner is contrary to the one, ſo the outrages of the ſinner are able to defeat the other ; than which nothing can be more falſe. The truth is plainly aſſerted and nobly expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt in the text, ' Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee ; the ' remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.'

This

This pſalm was evidently compoſed as a ſong of praiſe for ſome ſignal victory obtained, which was at the ſame time a remarkable deliverance from threatening danger. The author was one or other of the later prophets, and the occaſion, probably, the unſucceſsful aſſault of Jeruſalem, by the army of Senacherib, king of Aſſyria, in the days of Hezekiah. Great was the inſolence and boaſting of his generals and ſervants againſt the city of the living God, as may be ſeen in the thirty-ſixth chapter of Iſaiah. Yet it pleaſed God to deſtroy their enemies, and, by his own immediate interpoſition, to grant them deliverance. Therefore the Pſalmiſt ſays, in the fifth and ſixth verſes of this Pſalm, 'The ſtout-hearted are ſpoiled, they have ſlept their ſleep. 'None of the men of might have found their 'hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob! 'both the chariots and the horſe are caſt into 'a deep ſleep.' After a few more remarks to the ſame purpoſe, he draws the inference, or makes the reflection in the text, 'Surely the 'wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee; the remainder 'of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain:' which may be paraphraſed thus; the fury and injuſtice of oppreſſors ſhall bring in a tribute of praiſe to thee; the influence of thy righteous providence ſhall be clearly diſcerned; the countenance and ſupport thou wilt give to thine own people ſhall be gloriouſly illuſtrated: thou ſhalt ſet the bounds which the boldeſt cannot paſs.

I am

I am sensible, my brethren, that the time and occasion of this psalm, may seem to be in one respect, ill suited to the interesting circumstances of this country at present. It was composed after the victory was obtained; whereas we are now but putting on the harness, and entering upon an important contest, the length of which it is impossible to foresee, and the issue of which it will perhaps be thought presumption to foretel. But as the truth, with respect to God's moral government, is the same and unchangeable; as the issue, in the case of Senacherib's invasion, did but lead the prophet to acknowledge it; our duty and interest conspire in calling upon us to improve it. And I have chosen to insist upon it on this day of solemn humiliation, as it will probably help us to a clear and explicit view of what should be the chief subject of our prayers and endeavours, as well as the great object of our hope and trust, in our present situation.

The truth, then, asserted in this text, which I propose to illustrate and improve, is,—'That 'all the disorderly passions of men whether ex-'posing the innocent to private injury, or whe-'ther they are the arrows of divine judgment in 'public calamity, shall in the end, be to the 'praise of God.' Or, to apply it more particularly to the present state of the American Colonies, and the plague of war,—'The ambition 'of mistaken princes, the cunning and cruelty 'of oppressive and corrupt ministers, and even

'the

'the inhumanity of brutal ſoldiers, however 'dreadful, ſhall finally promote the glory of 'God; and in the mean-time, while the ſtorm 'continues, his mercy and kindneſs ſhall appear 'in preſcribing bounds to their rage and fury.'

In diſcourſing of this ſubject, it is my intention, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace,

I. To point out to you in ſome particulars, how the wrath of man praiſes God.

II. To apply theſe principles to our preſent ſituation, by inferences of truth for your inſtruction and comfort, and by ſuitable exhortations to duty in the important criſis.

I. In the firſt place, I am to point out to you, in ſome particulars, how the wrath of man praiſes God. I ſay, in ſome inſtances, becauſe it is far from being in my power, either to mention or explain the whole. There is an unſearchable depth in the divine counſels, which it is impoſſible for us to penetrate. It is the duty of every good man to place the moſt unlimited confidence in divine wiſdom, and to believe that thoſe meaſures of providence that are moſt unintelligible to him, are yet planned with the ſame ſkill, and directed to the ſame great purpoſes as others, the reaſon and tendency of which he can explain in the cleareſt manner. But where revelation and experience enables us to diſcover the

the wiſdom, equity, or mercy of divine providence, nothing can be more delightful or profitable to a ſerious mind, and therefore I beg your attention to the following remarks.

In the firſt place, the wrath of man praiſes God, as it is an example and illuſtration of divine truth, and clearly points out the corruption of our nature, which is the foundation-ſtone of the doctrine of redemption. Nothing can be more abſolutely neceſſary to true religion, than a clear and full conviction of the ſinfulneſs of our nature and ſtate. Without this there can be neither repentance in the ſinner, nor humility in the believer. Without this all that is ſaid in Scripture of the wiſdom and mercy of God, in providing a Saviour, is without force and without meaning. Juſtly does our Saviour ſay, 'the 'whole have no need of a phyſician, but thoſe 'that are ſick. I came not to call the righteous 'but ſinners to repentance.' Thoſe who are not ſenſible that they are ſinners, will treat every exhortation to repentance, and every offer of mercy, with diſdain or defiance.

But where can we have a more affecting view of the corruption of our nature, than in the wrath of man, when exerting itſelf in oppreſſion, cruelty, and blood? It muſt be owned, indeed, that this truth is abundantly manifeſt in times of the greateſt tranquillity. Others may, if they pleaſe, treat the corruption of our nature as a chimera; for my part, I ſee it every where, and

I feel it every day. All the diſorders in human ſociety, and the greateſt part even of the unhappineſs we are expoſed to, ariſes from the envy, malice, covetouſneſs, and other luſts of man. If we and all about us were juſt what we ought to be in all reſpects; we ſhould not need to go any further for heaven, for it would be upon earth. But war and violence preſent a ſpectacle ſtill more awful. How affecting is it to think, that the luſt of domination ſhould be ſo violent and univerſal! That men ſhould ſo rarely be ſatisfied with their own poſſeſſions and acquiſitions, or even with the benefit that would ariſe from mutual ſervice, but ſhould look upon the happineſs and tranquillity of others, as an obſtruction to their own. That, as if the great law of nature were not enough, 'duſt thou art, and 'to duſt thou ſhalt return,' they ſhould be ſo furiouſly ſet for the deſtruction of each other. It is ſhocking to think, ſince the firſt murder of Abel by his brother Cain, what havock has been made of man by man in every age. What is it that fills the pages of hiſtory, but the wars and contentions of princes and empires? What vaſt numbers has lawleſs ambition brought into the field, and delivered as a prey to the deſtructive ſword!

If we dwell a little upon the circumſtances, they become deeply affecting. The mother bears a child with pain, rears him by the laborious attendance of many years; yet in the prime

prime of life, in the vigour of health, and bloom of beauty, in a moment he is cut down by the dreadful inſtruments of death. 'Every battle 'of the warrior is with confuſed noiſe, and 'garments rolled in blood;' but the horror of the ſcene is not confined to the field of ſlaughter. Few go there unrelated, or fall unlamented; in every hoſtile encounter, what muſt be the impreſſion upon the relations of the deceaſed? The bodies of the dead can only be ſeen, or the cries of the dying heard for a ſingle day; but many days ſhall not put an end to the mourning of a parent for a beloved ſon, the joy and ſupport of his age, or of the widow and helpleſs offſpring for a father, taken away in the fulneſs of health and vigour.

But if this may be juſtly ſaid of all wars between man and man, what ſhall we be able to ſay that is ſuitable to the abhorred ſcene of civil war between citizen and citizen? How deeply affecting is it, that thoſe who are the ſame in complexion, the ſame in blood, in language, and in religion, ſhould, notwithſtanding, butcher one another with unrelenting rage, and glory in the deed? That men ſhould lay waſte the fields of their fellow ſubjects, with whoſe proviſion they themſelves had been often fed, and conſume with devouring fire thoſe houſes, in which they had often found a hoſpitable ſhelter?

Theſe things are apt to overcome a weak mind with fear, or overwhelm it with ſorrow, and in

the greateſt number are apt to excite the higheſt indignation, and kindle up a ſpirit of revenge. If this laſt has no other tendency than to direct and invigorate the meaſures of ſelf-defence, I do not take upon me to blame it; on the contrary, I call it neceſſary and laudable.

But what I mean at this time to prove by the preceding reflections, and wiſh to impreſs on your minds, is the depravity of our nature. 'From whence come wars and fightings among 'you,' ſays the Apoſtle James, 'come they not 'hence, even from your luſts, that war in your 'members?' Men of lax and corrupt principles, take great delight in ſpeaking to the praiſe of human nature, and extolling its dignity, without diſtinguiſhing what it was, at its firſt creation, from what it is in its preſent fallen ſtate. Theſe fine ſpeculations are very grateful to a worldly mind. They are alſo much more pernicious to uncautious and unthinking youth, than even the temptations to a diſſolute and ſenſual life, againſt which they are fortified by the dictates of natural conſcience, and a ſenſe of public ſhame. But I appeal from theſe viſionary reaſonings to the hiſtory of all ages, and the inflexible teſtimony of daily experience. Theſe will tell us what men have been in their practice, and from thence you may judge what they are by nature, while unrenewed. If I am not miſtaken, a cool and candid attention, either to the paſt hiſtory, or preſent ſtate of the world, but above

above all, to the ravages of lawleſs power, ought to humble us in the duſt. It ſhould at once lead us to acknowledge the juſt view given us in ſcripture, of our loſt ſtate; to deſire the happy influence of renewing grace each for ourſelves; and to long for the dominion of righteouſneſs and peace, when 'men ſhall beat their ſwords 'into plow-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning 'hooks; when nation ſhall not lift up ſword a-'gainſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any 'more.' †.

† I cannot help embracing this opportunity of making a remark or two upon a virulent reflexion thrown out againſt this doctrine, in a well known pamphlet, *Common Senſe*. The author of that work expreſſes himſelf thus; 'If the firſt king of any 'country was by election, that likewiſe eſtabliſhes 'a precedent for the next; for to ſay, that the 'right of all future generations is taken away, by 'the act of the firſt electors, in their choice not 'only of a king, but of a family of kings for ever, 'hath no parallel in or out of ſcripture, but the 'doctrine of original ſin, which ſuppoſes the free 'will of all men loſt in Adam; and from ſuch 'compariſon, it will admit of no other: hereditary 'ſucceſſion can derive no glory. For as in Adam 'all ſinned, and as in the firſt electors all men 'obeyed; as in the one all mankind were ſubjected 'to Satan, and in the other to Sovereignty; as 'our innocence was loſt in the firſt, and our au-'thority in the laſt; and as both diſable us from 're-aſſuming ſome former ſtate and privilege, it 'unanſwerably follows, that original ſin and here-'ditary

2. The wrath of man praiſeth God as it is the inſtrument in his hand for bringing ſinners to repentance, and for the correction and improvement of his own children. Whatever be the nature of the affliction with which he viſits either perſons, families, or nations; whatever be the diſpoſition or intention of thoſe whoſe malice he employs as a ſcourge, the deſign on his part is, to rebuke men for iniquity, to bring them to repentance, and to promote their holineſs and peace. The

'ditary ſucceſſion are parallels. Diſhonourable 'rank! Inglorious connection! Yet the moſt 'ſubtle ſophiſt cannot produce a juſter ſimile*.' Without the ſhadow of reaſoning, he is pleaſed to repreſent the doctrine of original ſin as an object of contempt or abhorrence. I beg leave to demur a a little to the candor, the prudence, and the juſtice of this proceeding.

1. Was it modeſt or candid for a perſon without name or character, to talk in this ſupercilious manner of a doctrine that has been eſpouſed and defended by many of the greateſt and beſt men that the world ever ſaw, and which makes an eſſential part of the eſtabliſhed Creeds and Confeſſions of all the Proteſtant churches without exception? I thought the grand modern plea had been, freedom of ſentiment, and charitable thoughts of one another. Are ſo many of us, then, beyond the reach of this gentleman's charity? I do aſſure him that ſuch preſumption and ſelf-confidence are no recommendation to me either of his character or ſentiments.

2. Was it prudent, when he was pleading a public cauſe, to ſpeak in ſuch opprobrious terms of a doctrine

* *Common Senſe, page* 11. *Bradfords edition.*

The ſalutary nature, and ſanctifying influence of affliction in general, is often taken notice of in ſcripture, both as making part of the purpoſe of God, and the experience of his ſaints. 'Now, no 'affliction,' ſays the apoſtle, 'for the preſent 'ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous: Neverthe- 'leſs afterward it yieldeth the peacable fruit of 'righteouſneſs unto them which are exerciſed 'thereby.' But what we are particularly led to obſerve by the ſubject of this diſcourſe is, that the

doctrine, which he knew, or ought to have known, was believed and profeſſed by, I ſuppoſe, a great majority of very different denominations? Is this gentleman ignorant of human nature, as well as an enemy to the Chriſtian faith? Are men ſo little tenacious of their religious ſentiments, whether true or falſe? The prophet thought otherwiſe, who ſaid, 'Hath a nation changed their gods which yet 'are no gods?' Was it the way to obtain the favour of the public, to deſpiſe what they hold ſacred? Or ſhall we ſuppoſe this author ſo aſtoniſhingly ignorant, as to think that all men now, whoſe favour is worth aſking, have given up the doctrine of the New-Teſtament? If he does, he is greatly miſtaken.

3. In fine, I aſk, where was the juſtice of this proceeding? Is there ſo little to be ſaid for the doctrine of original ſin, that it is not to be refuted, but deſpiſed? Is the ſtate of the world ſuch, as to render this doctrine not only falſe, but incredible? Has the fruit been of ſuch a quality as to exclude all doubts of the goodneſs of the tree?—On the contrary, I cannot help being of opinion, that ſuch has

wrath of man, or the violence of the oppreſſor, praiſeth God in this reſpect, that it has a peculiar tendency to alarm the ſecure conſcience, to convince and humble the obſtinate ſinner. This is plain from the nature of the thing, and from the teſtimony of experience. Public calamity, particularly the deſtroying ſword, is ſo awful that it cannot but have a powerful influence in leading men, to conſider the preſence and the power of God. It threatens them not only in themſelves, but touches them in all that is dear to them, whether relations or poſſeſſions. The prophet Iſaiah ſays, 'Yea, in the way of thy judgments, 'O Lord, have we waited for thee,—for when 'thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants 'of the world will learn righteouſneſs.' He conſiders it as the moſt powerful mean of alarming the ſecure, and ſubduing the obſtinate. 'Lord, 'when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee, 'but they ſhall ſee and be aſhamed for their envy 'at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies 'ſhall devour them.' It is alſo ſometimes repreſented as a ſymptom of a hopeleſs and irrecoverable ſtate, when public judgments have no effect. Thus ſays the prophet Jeremiah, 'O Lord, are not

has been the viſible ſtate of the world in every age as cannot be accounted for on any other principles, than what we learn from the word of God, that 'the imagination of the heart of man is only evil 'from his youth and that continually,' Gen. vi. 5.—viii. 21.

'not thine eyes upon the truth? thou haſt ſtrick-
'en them, but they have not grieved; thou haſt
'conſumed them, but they have refuſed to re-
'ceive correction: They have made their faces
'harder than a rock, they have refuſed to return.'
We can eaſily ſee in the hiſtory of the children of Iſrael, how ſevere ſtrokes brought them to ſubmiſſion and penitence. 'When he ſlew them,
'then they ſought him; and they returned and
'enquired early after God; and they remember-
'ed that God was their rock, and the high God
'their redeemer.' Both nations in general, and private perſons are apt to grow remiſs and lax in a time of proſperity and ſeeming ſecurity; but when their earthly comforts are endangered or withdrawn, it lays them under a kind of neceſſity to ſeek for ſomething better in their place. Men muſt have comfort from one quarter or another. When earthly things are in a pleaſing and promiſing condition, too many are apt to find their reſt, and be ſatisfied with them as their only portion. But when the vanity and paſſing nature of all created comfort is diſcovered, they are compelled to look for ſomething more durable as well as valuable. What therefore can be more to the praiſe of God, than that when a whole people have forgotten their reſting place, when they have abuſed their privileges, and deſpiſed their mercies, they ſhould, by diſtreſs and ſuffering, be made to hearken to the rod and return to their duty?

There

There is an inexpreſſible depth and variety in the judgments of God, as in all his other works; but we may lay down this as a certain principle, that if there were no ſin, there could be no ſuffering. Therefore they are certainly for the correction of ſin, or for the trial, illuſtration, and perfecting of the grace and virtue of his own people. We are not to ſuppoſe, that thoſe who ſuffer moſt or who ſuffer ſooneſt, are therefore more criminal than others. Our Saviour himſelf thought it neceſſary to give a caution againſt this raſh concluſion, as we are informed by the evangeliſt Luke; 'There were preſent at that 'ſeaſon, ſome that told him of the Galileans, 'whoſe blood Pilate had mingled with their ſa-'crifices. And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, 'Suppoſe ye that theſe Galileans were ſinners a-'bove all the Galileans, becauſe they ſuffered 'ſuch things? I tell you, nay; but except ye re-'pent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.' I ſuppoſe we may ſay, with ſufficient warrant, that it often happens, that thoſe for whom God hath deſigns of the greateſt mercy, are firſt brought to the trial, that they may enjoy, in due time, the ſalutary effect of the unpalatable medicine.

I muſt alſo take leave to obſerve, and I hope no pious humble ſufferer will be unwilling to make the application, that there is often a diſcernible mixture of ſovereignty and righteouſneſs in providential diſpenſations. It is the prerogative of God to do what he will with his own; but he often

often diſplays his juſtice itſelf, by throwing into the furnace thoſe, who, though they may not be viſibly worſe than others, may yet have more to anſwer for, as having been favoured with more diſtinguiſhed privileges, both civil and ſacred. It is impoſſible for us to make a juſt and full compariſon of the character either of perſons or nations, and it would be extremely fooliſh for any to attempt it, either for increaſing their own ſecurity, or impeaching the juſtice of the Supreme Ruler. Let us therefore neither forget the truth, nor go beyond it. 'His mercy fills 'the earth.' He is alſo 'known by the judg-'ment which he executeth.' The wrath of man in its moſt tempeſtuous rage, fulfils his will, and finally promotes the good of his choſen.

3. The wrath of man praiſeth God, as he ſets bounds to it, or reſtrains it by his providence, and ſometimes makes it evidently a mean of promoting and illuſtrating his glory.

There is no part of divine providence in which a greater beauty and majeſty appears, than when the Almighty Ruler turns the counſels of wicked men into confuſion, and makes them militate againſt themſelves. If the Pſalmiſt may be thought to have had a view in this text to the truths illuſtrated in the two former obſervations, there is no doubt at all that he had a particular view to this, as he ſays in the latter part of the verſe, 'the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.' The ſcripture abounds with inſtances, in which the

the designs of oppressors were either wholly disappointed, or in execution fell far short of the malice of their intention; and in some they turned out to the honour and happiness of the persons or the people, whom they were intended to destroy. We have an instance of the first of these in the history to which my text relates *. We have also an instance in Esther, in which the most mischievous designs of Haman, the Son of Hamedatha the Agagite, against Mordecai the Jew, and the nation from which he sprung, turned out at last to his own destruction, the honour of Mordecai, and the salvation and peace of his people.

From the New Testament I will make choice of that memorable event on which the salvation of believers in every age rests as its foundation, the death and sufferings of the Son of God. This the great adversary, and all his agents and instruments, prosecuted with unrelenting rage. When they had blackened him with slander, when they had scourged him with shame, when they had condemned him in judgment, and nailed him to the cross, how could they help esteeming their victory complete? But, oh the unsearchable wisdom of God! they were but perfecting the great design laid for the salvation of sinners. Our blessed Redeemer, by his death, finished his work,

* The matter is fully stated and reasoned upon by the prophet Isaiah, chap. x. from the 5th to the 19th verse.

work, overcame principalities and powers, and made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in his croſs. With how much juſtice do the apoſtles and their company offer this doxology to God? 'They lift up their voice with one 'accord and ſaid, Lord, thou art God which haſt 'made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all 'that in them is: who by the mouth of thy 'ſervant David haſt ſaid, Why did the heathen 'rage, and the people imagine vain things? The 'kings of the earth ſtood up, and the rulers 'were gathered together againſt the Lord, and a-'gainſt his Chriſt. For of a truth, againſt thy 'holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, 'both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gen-'tiles, and the people of Iſrael, were gathered 'together, for to do whatſoever thy hand and 'thy counſel determined before to be done.'

In all after ages in conformity to this, the deepeſt laid contrivances of the prince of darkneſs, have turned out to the confuſion of their author; and I know not but, conſidering his malice and pride, this perpetual diſappointment, and the ſuperiority of divine wiſdom, may be one great ſource of his ſuffering and torment. The croſs hath ſtill been the banner of truth, under which it hath been carried through the world. Perſecution has been but as the furnace to the gold, to purge it of its droſs, to manifeſt its purity, and increaſe its luſtre. It was taken notice of very early, that the blood of the martyrs was the ſeed

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of Chriſtianity; the more abundantly it was ſhed the more plentifully did the harveſt grow.

So certain has this appeared, that the moſt violent infidels, both of early and of later ages, have endeavoured to account for it, and have obſerved, that there is a ſpirit of obſtinacy in man, which inclines him to reſiſt violence, and that ſeverity doth but increaſe oppoſition, be the cauſe what it will. They ſuppoſe that perſecution is equally proper to propagate truth and error. This, though in part true, will by no means generally hold. Such an apprehenſion, however, gave occaſion to a glorious triumph of divine providence, of an oppoſite kind, which I muſt ſhortly relate to you. One of the Roman emperors, Julian, ſurnamed the apoſtate, perceiving how impoſſible it was to ſuppreſs the goſpel by violence, endeavoured to extinguiſh it by neglect and ſcorn. He left the Chriſtians unmoleſted for ſome time, but gave all manner of encouragement to thoſe of oppoſite principles, and particularly to the Jews, out of hatred to the Chriſtians; and that he might bring public diſgrace upon the Galileans, as he affected to ſtile them, he encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple of Jeruſalem, and viſibly refute the prophecy of Chriſt, that it ſhould lye under perpetual deſolation. But this profane attempt was ſo ſignally fruſtrated, that it ſerved as much as any one circumſtance to ſpread the glory of our Redeemer, and eſtabliſh the faith of his ſaints. It is affirmed by ſome ancient

authors

authors, particularly by Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen hiſtorian, that fire came out of the earth and conſumed the workmen when laying the foundation. But in whatever way it was prevented, it is beyond all controverſy, from the concurring teſtimony of Heathens and Chriſtians, that little or no progreſs was ever made in it, and that in a ſhort time, it was entirely defeated.

It is proper here to obſerve, that at the time of the Reformation, when religion began to revive, nothing contributed more to facilitate its reception, and increaſe its progreſs, than the violence of its perſecutors. Their cruelty, and the patience of the ſufferers, naturally diſpoſed men to examine and weigh the cauſe to which they adhered with ſo much conſtancy and reſolution. At the ſame time alſo, when they were perſecuted in one city they fled to another, and carried the diſcoveries of Popiſh fraud to every part of the world. It was by ſome of thoſe who were perſecuted in Germany, that the light of the reformation was brought ſo early into Britain.

The power of divine providence appears with the moſt diſtinguiſhed luſtre, when ſmall and inconſiderable circumſtances, and ſometimes, the weather and ſeaſons have defeated the moſt formidable armaments, and fruſtrated the beſt concerted expeditions. Near two hundred years ago, the monarchy of Spain was in the height of its power and glory, and determined to cruſh the

intereſt of the reformation. They ſent out a powerful armament againſt Britain, giving it oſtentatiouſly, and in my opinion profanely, the name of the Invincible Armada. But it pleaſed God ſo entirely to diſcomfit it by tempeſts, that a ſmall part of it returned home, though no Britiſh force had been oppoſed to it at all.

We have a remarkable inſtance of the influence of ſmall circumſtances in providence in the Engliſh hiſtory. The two moſt remarkable perſons in the civil wars, had earneſtly deſired to withdraw themſelves from the contentions of the times, Mr Hampden and Oliver Cromwell. They had actually taken their paſſage in a ſhip for New-England, when by an arbitary order of council they were compelled to remain at home. The conſequence of this was, that one of them was the ſoul of the republican oppoſition to monarchical uſurpation during the civil wars; and the other, in the courſe of that conteſt, was the greateſt inſtrument in bringing the tyrant to the block.

The only other hiſtorical remark I am to make is, that the violent perſecution which many eminent Chriſtians met with in England from their brethren, who called themſelves Proteſtants, drove them in great numbers to a diſtant part of the world, where the light of the goſpel and true religion were unknown. Some of the American ſettlements, particularly thoſe in New-England, were chiefly made by them; and as they

they carried the knowledge of Chriſt to the dark places of the earth, ſo they continue themſelves in as great a degree of purity of faith, and ſtrictneſs of practice, or rather a greater, than is to be found in any proteſtant church now in the world. Does not the wrath of man in this inſtance praiſe God? Was not the accuſer of the brethren, who ſtirred up their enemies, thus taken in his own craftineſs, and his kingdom ſhaken by the very means which he employed to eſtabliſh it †.

II. I proceed now to the ſecond general head, which was to apply the principles illuſtrated above to our preſent ſituation, by inferences of truth for your inſtruction and comfort, and by ſuitable exhortations to duty in this important criſis. And,

In the firſt place, I would take the opportunity on this occaſion, and from this ſubject, to preſs every hearer to a ſincere concern for his own ſoul's ſalvation. There are times when the mind may be expected to be more awake to di-

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† Leſt this ſhould be thought a temporiſing compliment to the people of New-England, who have been the firſt ſufferers in the preſent conteſt, and have ſet ſo noble an example of invincible fortitude in withſtanding the violence of oppreſſion, I think it proper to obſerve, that the whole paragraph is copied from a ſermon on Pſalm lxxiv. 22. prepared and preached in Scotland, in the month of Auguſt, 1758.

vine truth, and the conſcience more open to the arrows of conviction than at others. A ſeaſon of public judgment is of this kind, as appears from what has been already ſaid. That curioſity and attention at leaſt are raiſed, in ſome degree, is plain from the unuſual throng of this aſſembly. Can you have a clearer view of the ſinfulneſs of your nature, than when the rod of the oppreſſor is lifted up, and when you ſee men putting on the habit of the warrior, and collecting on every hand the weapons of hoſtility and inſtruments of death? I do not blame your ardour in preparing for the reſolute defence of your temporal rights. But conſider, I beſeech you, the truly infinite importance of the ſalvation of your ſouls. Is it of much moment whether you and your children ſhall be rich or poor, at liberty or in bonds? Is it of much moment whether this beautiful country ſhall increaſe in fruitfulneſs from year to year, being cultivated by active induſtry, and poſſeſſed by independent freemen, or the ſcanty produce of the neglected fields ſhall be eaten up by hungry publicans, while the timid owner trembles at the tax-gatherer's approach? And is it of leſs moment my brethren, whether you ſhall be the heirs of glory, or the heirs of hell? Is your ſtate on earth for a few fleeting years of ſo much moment? And is it of leſs moment, what ſhall be your ſtate through endleſs ages? Have your aſſembled together willingly to hear what ſhall be ſaid on public affairs, and to join in imploring

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the blessing of God on the councils and arms of the United Colonies? And can you be unconcerned, what shall become of you for ever, when all the monuments of human greatness shall be laid in ashes? For, 'the earth itself and all the 'works that are therein shall be burnt up.'

Wherefore, my beloved hearers, as the ministry of reconciliation is committed to me, I beseech you in the most earnest manner, to attend to 'the things that belong to your peace, before 'they are hid from your eyes.' How soon, and in what manner a seal shall be set upon the character and state of every person here present, it is impossible to know; for he who only can know does not think proper to reveal it. But you may rest assured, that there is no time more suitable, and that there is none so safe as that which is present, since it is wholly uncertain whether any other shall be yours. Those who shall first fall in battle, have not many more warnings to receive. There are some few daring and hardened sinners who despise eternity itself, and set their maker at defiance; but the far greater number, by staving off their convictions to a more convenient season, have been taken unprepared, and thus eternally lost. I would therefore earnestly press the apostle's exhortation, 'We then, as workers together with him, be-'seech you also, that ye receive not the grace of 'God in vain: for he saith, I have heard thee 'in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation

'have I succoured thee: Behold, now is the ac-
'cepted time; behold, now is the day of salva-
'tion.'

Suffer me to beseech you, or rather to give you warning not to rest satisfied with a form of godliness, denying the power thereof. There can be no true religion, till there be a discovery of your lost state by nature and practice, and an unfeigned acceptance of Christ Jesus, as he is offered in the gospel. Unhappy they who either despise his mercy, or are ashamed of his cross! Believe it, 'there is no salvation in any other. 'There is no other name under heaven given 'among men by which we must be saved.' Unless you are united to him by a lively faith, not the resentment of a haughty monarch, but the sword of divine justice hangs over you, and the fulness of divine vengeance shall speedily overtake you. I do not speak this only to the heaven-daring profligate, or grovelling sensualist, but to every insensible secure sinner; to all those however decent and orderly in their civil deportment, who live to themselves, and have their part and portion in this life; in fine, to all who are yet in a state of nature, for 'except a man be 'born again, he cannot see the kingdom of 'God.' The fear of man may make you hide your profanity; prudence and experience may make you abhor intemperance and riot; as you advance in life, one vice may supplant another and hold its place; but nothing less than the sovereign

ſovereign grace of God can produce a ſaving change of heart and temper, or fit you for his immediate preſence.

2. From what has been ſaid upon this ſubject, you may ſee what ground there is to give praiſe to God for his favours already beſtowed on us, reſpecting the public cauſe. It would be a criminal inattention not to obſerve the ſingular interpoſition of providence hitherto, in behalf of the American colonies. It is, however, impoſſible for me, in a ſingle diſcourſe, as well as improper at this time, to go through every ſtep of our paſt tranſactions; I muſt therefore content myſelf with a few remarks. How many diſcoveries have been made of the deſigns of enemies in Britain and among ourſelves, in a manner as unexpected to us as to them, and in ſuch ſeaſon as to prevent their effect? What ſurpriſing ſucceſs has attended our encounters, in almoſt every inſtance? Has not the boaſted diſcipline of regular and veteran ſoldiers been turned into confuſion and diſmay before the new and maiden courage of free men, in defence of their property and right? In what great mercy has blood been ſpared on the ſide of this injured country? Some important victories in the ſouth have been gained with ſo little loſs, that enemies will probably think it has been diſſembled; as many, even of ourſelves thought, till time rendered it undeniable. But theſe were comparatively of ſmall moment. The ſignal advantage we have gained by the evacuation

evacuation of Boſton, the ſhameful flight of the army and navy of Britain, was brought about without the loſs of a man. To all this we may add, that the counſels of our enemies have been viſibly confounded, ſo that I believe I may ſay with truth, that there is hardly any ſtep which they have taken, but it has operated ſtrongly againſt themſelves, and been more in our favour than if they had followed a contrary courſe.

While we give praiſe to God the ſupreme diſpoſer of all events, for his interpoſition in our behalf, let us guard againſt the dangerous error of truſting in, or boaſting of an arm of fleſh. I could earneſtly wiſh, that while our arms are crowned with ſucceſs, we might content ourſelves with a modeſt aſcription of it to the power of the higheſt. It has given me a great uneaſineſs to read ſome oſtentatious, vaunting expreſſions in our news papers, though happily, I think, much reſtrained of late. Let us not return to them again. If I am not miſtaken, not only the holy ſcriptures in general, and the truths of the glorious goſpel in particular, but the whole courſe of providence ſeems intended to abaſe the pride of man, and lay the vain-glorious in the duſt. How many inſtances does hiſtory furniſh us with of thoſe who, after exulting over, and deſpiſing their enemies, were ſignally and ſhamefully defeated*? The truth is, I believe, the remark

* There is no ſtory better known in Britiſh hiſtory

remark may be applied univerſally, and we may ſay, that through the whole frame of nature, and the whole ſyſtem of human life, that which promiſes moſt, performs the leaſt. The flowers of fineſt colour ſeldom have the ſweeteſt fragrance. The trees of quickeſt growth or faireſt form, are ſeldom of the greateſt value or duration. Deep waters move with leaſt noiſe. Men who think moſt are ſeldom talkative. And I think it holds as much in war as in any thing, that every boaſter is a coward.

Pardon me, my brethren, for inſiſting ſo much upon this which may ſeem but an immaterial circumſtance. It is in my opinion of very great moment. I look upon oſtentation and confidence to be a ſort of outrage upon providence, and when it becomes general, and infuſes itſelf into the ſpirit of a people, it is a forerunner of deſtruction. How does Goliath the champion, armed in a moſt formidable manner, expreſs his diſdain of David the ſtripling with his ſling and his ſtone? 'And when the Philiſtine looked a-'bout and ſaw David, he diſdained him: for he 'was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair 'countenance. And the Philiſtine ſaid unto 'David, Am I a dog, that thou comeſt unto me 'with ſtaves? And the Philiſtine curſed David

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tory, than that the officers of the French army, the night preceeding the battle of Agincourt, played at dice for Engliſh priſoners before they took them, and the next day were taken by them.

'by his gods; and the Philiſtine ſaid to David, 'Come to me and I will give thy fleſh unto the 'fowls of the air, and to the beaſts of the field.' But how juſt and modeſt the reply! 'Then ſaid 'David to the Philiſtine, thou comeſt to me with 'a ſword, and with a ſpear, and with a ſhield; 'but I come unto thee in the name of the Lord 'of hoſts, the God of the armies of Iſrael, whom 'thou haſt defied.' I was well pleaſed with a remark of this kind, thirty years ago, in a pamphlet, in which it was obſerved, that there was a great deal of profane oſtentation in the names given to ſhips of war, as the Victory, the Valiant, the Thunderer, the Dreadnought, the Terrible, the Fire-brand, the Furnace, the Lightning, the Infernal, and many more of the ſame kind. This the author conſidered as a ſymptom of the national character and manners, very unfavourable, and not likely to obtain the bleſſing of the God of Heaven ‡.

3. From

‡ I am ſenſible that one or two of theſe were ſhips taken from the French, which brought their names with them. But the greateſt number had their names impoſed in England; and I cannot help obſerving, that the victory often celebrated as the fineſt ſhip ever built in Britain, was loſt in the night without a ſtorm, by ſome unknown accident, and about twelve hundred perſons, many of them of the firſt families in the nation, were buried with it in the deep. I do not mean to infer any thing from this, but, that we ought to live under

3. From what has been ſaid you may learn, what encouragement you have to put your truſt in God, and hope for his aſſiſtance in the preſent important conflict. He is the Lord of hoſts, great in might, and ſtrong in battle. Whoever hath his countenance and approbation, ſhall have the beſt at laſt. I do not mean to ſpeak prophetically, but agreeable to the analogy of faith, and the principles of God's moral government. Some have obſerved, that true religion, and, in her train, dominion, riches, literature, and arts, have taken their courſe in a ſlow and gradual manner, from eaſt to weſt ſince the earth was ſettled after the flood, and from thence forbode the future glory of America. I leave this as a matter rather of conjecture than certainty; but obſerve, that if your cauſe is juſt,—if your principles are pure,—and if your conduct is prudent, you need not fear the multitude of oppoſing hoſts.

If your cauſe is juſt—you may look with confidence to the Lord, and intreat him to plead it as his own. You are all my witneſſes, that this is the firſt time of my introducing any political ſubject into the pulpit. At this ſeaſon, however, it

under the practical perſuaſion of what no man will doctrinally deny, that there is no warring with the elements, or with him who directs their force; that he is able to write diſappointment on the wiſeſt human ſchemes, and by the word of his power to fruſtrate the efforts of the greateſt monarch upon earth.

it is not only lawful but neceſſary; and I willingly embrace the opportunity of declaring my opinion without any heſitation, that the cauſe in which America is now in arms, is the cauſe of juſtice, of liberty, and of human nature. So far as we have hitherto proceeded, I am ſatisfied that the confederacy of the colonies has not been the effect of pride, reſentment, or ſedition, but of a deep and general conviction, that our civil and religious liberties, and conſequently in a great meaſure the temporal and eternal happineſs of us and our poſterity depended on the iſſue. The knowledge of God and his truths has from the beginning of the world been chiefly, if not entirely confined to theſe parts of the earth, where ſome degree of liberty and political juſtice were to be ſeen, and great were the difficulties with which they had to ſtruggle from the imperfection of human ſociety, and the unjuſt deciſions of uſurped authority. There is not a ſingle inſtance in hiſtory in which civil liberty was loſt, and religious liberty preſerved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the ſame time deliver the conſcience into bondage.

You ſhall not, my brethren, hear from me in the pulpit, what you have never heard from me in converſation; I mean, railing at the king perſonally, or even his miniſters and the parliament, and people of Britain as ſo many barbarous ſavages. Many of their actions have probably been

been worſe than their intentions. That they ſhould deſire unlimited dominion, if they can obtain or preſerve it, is neither new nor wonderful. I do not refuſe ſubmiſſion to their unjuſt claims, becauſe they are corrupt or profligate, although probably many of them are ſo; but becauſe they are men, and therefore liable to all the ſelfiſh bias inſeparable from human nature. I call this claim unjuſt of making laws to bind us in all caſes whatſoever, becauſe they are ſeparated from us, independent of us, and have an intereſt in oppoſing us. Would any man who could prevent it, give up his eſtate, perſon, and family, to the diſpoſal of his neighbour, although he had liberty to chuſe the wiſeſt and the beſt maſter? Surely not. This is the true and proper hinge of the controverſy between Great-Britain and America. It is however to be added, that ſuch is their diſtance from us, that a wiſe and prudent adminiſtration of our affairs is as impoſſible as the claim of authority is unjuſt. Such is and muſt be their ignorance of the ſtate of things here, ſo much time muſt elapſe before an error can be ſeen and remedied, and ſo much injuſtice and partiality muſt be expected from the arts and miſrepreſentation of intereſted perſons, that for theſe colonies to depend wholly upon the legiſlature of Great-Britain, would be like many other oppreſſive connexions, injury to the maſter, and ruin to the ſlave.

The management of the war itſelf on their

part, would furniſh new proof of this, if any were needful. Is it not manifeſt with what abſurdity and impropriety they have conducted their own deſigns? We had nothing ſo much to fear as diſſenſion; and they have, by wanton and unneceſſary cruelty, forced us into union. At the ſame time to let us ſee what we have to expect, and what would be the fatal conſequence of unlimited ſubmiſſion, they have uniformly called thoſe acts Lenity, which filled this whole continent with reſentment and horror. The ineffable diſdain expreſſed by our fellow ſubject, in ſaying, "That he would not hearken to America, till ſhe was at his feet," has armed more men, and inſpired more deadly rage, than could have been done by laying waſte a whole province with fire and ſword. Again, we wanted not numbers, but time; and they ſent over handful after handful till we were ready to oppoſe a multitude greater than they have to ſend. In fine, if there was one place ſtronger than the reſt, and more able and willing to reſiſt, there they made the attack, and left the others till they were duly informed, completely inſenſed, and fully furniſhed with every inſtrument of war.

I mention theſe things, my brethren, not only as grounds of confidence in God, who can eaſily overthrow the wiſdom of the wiſe, but as deciſive proofs of the impoſſibility of theſe great and growing ſtates, being ſafe and happy when every part of their internal polity is dependent on Great Britain.

Britain. If, on account of their diſtance, and ignorance of our ſituation, they could not conduct their own quarrel with propriety for one year, how can they give direction and vigour to every department of our civil conſtitutions from age to age? There are fixed bounds to every human thing. When the branches of a tree grow very large and weighty they fall off from the trunk. The ſharpeſt ſword will not pierce when it cannot reach. And there is a certain diſtance from the ſeat of government, where an attempt to rule will either produce tyranny and helpleſs ſubjection, or provoke reſiſtance and effect a ſeparation.

I have ſaid, if your principles are pure—The meaning of this is, if your preſent oppoſition to the claims of the Britiſh miniſtry does not ariſe from a ſeditious and turbulent ſpirit, or a wanton contempt of legal authority; from a blind and factious attachment to particular perſons or parties; or from a ſelfiſh rapacious diſpoſition, and a deſire to turn public confuſion to private profit—but from a concern for the intereſt of your country, and the ſafety of yourſelves and your poſterity. On this ſubject I cannot help obſerving, that though it would be a miracle if there were not many ſelfiſh perſons among us, and diſcoveries now and then made of mean and intereſted tranſactions, yet they have been comparatively inconſiderable both in number and effect. In general, there has been ſo great a degree of pub-

lic ſpirit, that we have much more reaſon to be thankful for its vigour and prevalence, than to wonder at the few appearances of diſhoneſty or diſaffection. It would be very uncandid to aſcribe the univerſal ardour that has prevailed among all ranks of men, and the ſpirited exertions in the moſt diſtant colonies to any thing elſe than public ſpirit. Nor was there ever perhaps in hiſtory ſo general a commotion from which religious differences have been ſo entirely excluded. Nothing of this kind has as yet been heard, except of late in the abſurd, but malicious and deteſtable attempts of our few remaining enemies to introduce them. At the ſame time I muſt alſo, for the honour of this country obſerve, that though government in the ancient forms has been ſo long unhinged, and in ſome colonies not ſufficient care taken to ſubſtitute another in its place; yet has there been, by common conſent, a much greater degree of order and public peace, than men of reflexion and experience foretold or expected. From all theſe circumſtances I conclude favourably of the principles of the friends of liberty, and do earneſtly exhort you to adopt and act upon thoſe which have been deſcribed, and reſiſt the influence of every other.

Once more; if to the juſtice of your cauſe, and the purity of your principles you add prudence in your conduct, there will be the greateſt reaſon to hope, by the bleſſing of God, for proſperity and ſucceſs. By prudence in conducting this important

that struggle, I have chiefly in view union, firmness, and patience. Every body must perceive the absolute necessity of union. It is indeed in every body's mouth, and therefore, instead of attempting to convince you of its importance, I will only caution you against the usual causes of division. If persons of every rank, instead of implicitly complying with the orders of those whom they themselves have chosen to direct, will needs judge every measure over again, when it comes to be put in execution: if different classes of men intermix their little private views, or clashing interest with public affairs, and marshal into parties, the merchant against the landholder, and the landholder against the merchant: if local provincial pride and jealousy arise, and you allow yourselves to speak with contempt of the courage, character, manners, or even language of particular places, you are doing a greater injury to the common cause, than you are aware of. If such practices are admitted among us, I shall look upon it as one of the most dangerous symptoms, and if they become general, a presage of approaching ruin.

By firmness and patience, I mean a resolute adherence to your duty, and laying your account with many difficulties as well as occasional disappointments. In a former part of this discourse, I have cautioned you against ostentation and vain glory. Be pleased further to observe, that extremes often beget one another; the same per-

ſons who exult extravagantly on ſucceſs, are generally moſt liable to deſpondent timidity on every little inconſiderable defeat. Men of this character are the bane and corruption of every ſociety or party to which they belong; but they are eſpecially the ruin of an army, if ſuffered to continue in it. Remember the viciſſitude of human things, and the uſual courſe of providence. How often has a juſt cauſe been reduced to the loweſt ebb, and yet when firmly adhered to, has become finally triumphant? I ſpeak this now while the affairs of the colonies are in ſo proſperous a ſtate, leſt this proſperity itſelf ſhould render you leſs able to bear unexpected misfortunes.—The ſum of the whole is, that the bleſſing of God is only to be looked for by thoſe who are not wanting in the diſcharge of their own duty. I would neither have you to truſt in an arm of fleſh, nor ſit with folded hands to expect that miracles ſhould be wrought in your defence.—This is a ſin which is in ſcripture ſtiled tempting God. In oppoſition to it, I would exhort you as Joab did the hoſt of Iſrael, who though he does not appear to have had a ſpotleſs character throughout, certainly in this inſtance ſpoke like a prudent general and a pious man. 'Be of good courage, 'and let us behave ourſelves valiantly for our 'people, and for the cities of our God; and 'let the Lord do that which is good in his ſight.'

I ſhall now conclude this diſcourſe by ſome exhortations to duty, founded upon the truths, which

which have been illustrated above, and suited to the interesting state of this country at the present time; and,

1. Suffer me to recommend to you an attention to the public interest of religion; or, in other words, zeal for the glory of God and the good of others. I have already endeavoured to exhort sinners to repentance; what I have here in view is to point out to you the concern which every good man ought to take in the national character and manners, and the means which he ought to use for promoting public virtue, and bearing down impiety and vice. This is a matter of the utmost moment, and which ought to be well understood, both in its nature and principles. Nothing is more certain than that a general profligacy and corruption of manners makes a people ripe for destruction. A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for some time, but beyond a certain pitch even the best constitution will be ineffectual, and slavery must ensue. On the other hand, when the manners of a nation are pure, when true religion and internal principles maintain their vigour, the attempts of the most powerful enemies to oppress them are commonly baffled and disappointed. This will be found equally certain, whether we consider the great principles of God's moral government, or the operation and influence of natural causes.

What

What follows from this? That he is the beſt friend to American liberty, who is the moſt ſincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who ſets himſelf with the greateſt firmneſs to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy to God, I ſcruple not to call him an enemy to his country. Do not ſuppoſe, my brethren, that I mean to recommend a furious and angry zeal for the circumſtantials of religion, or the contentions of one ſect with another about their peculiar diſtinctions. I do not wiſh you to oppoſe any body's religion, but every body's wickedneſs. Perhaps there are few ſurer marks of the reality of religion, than when a man feels himſelf more joined in ſpirit to a truly holy perſon of a different denomination, than to an irregular liver of his own. It is therefore your duty, in this important and critical ſeaſon, to exert yourſelves, every one in his proper ſphere, to ſtem the tide of prevailing vice, to promote the knowledge of God, the reverence of his name and worſhip, and obedience to his laws.

Perhaps you will aſk, what it is that you are called to do for this purpoſe farther than your own perſonal duty? I anſwer, this itſelf, when taken in its proper extent, is not a little. The nature and obligation of viſible religion is, I am afraid little underſtood, and leſs attended to.

Many from a real or pretended fear of the imputation of hypocriſy, baniſh from their converſation

tion and carriage, every appearance of respect and submission to the living God. What a weakness and meanness of spirit does it discover for a man to be ashamed, in the presence of his fellow sinners, to profess that reverence to almighty God which he inwardly feels! The truth is, he makes himself truly liable to the accusation which he means to avoid. It is as genuine and perhaps a more culpable hypocrisy to appear to have less religion than you really have, than to appear to have more. This false shame is a more extensive evil than is commonly apprehended. We contribute constantly, though insensibly, to form each others characters and manners; and therefore, the usefulness of a strictly holy and conscientious deportment is not confined to the possessor, but spreads its happy influence to all that are within its reach. I need scarcely add, that in proportion as men are distinguished by understanding, literature, age, rank, office, wealth, or any other circumstance, their example will be useful on the one hand, or pernicious on the other.

But I cannot content myself with barely recommending a silent example. There is a dignity in virtue which is entitled to authority, and ought to claim it. In many cases it is the duty of a good man, by open reproof and opposition, to wage war with profaneness. There is a scripture precept delivered in very singular terms, to which I beg your attention; 'Thou shalt not hate thy 'brother in thy heart, but shalt in any ways re-

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'buke him, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.' How prone are many to repreſent reproof as flowing from ill nature and ſurlineſs of temper? The Spirit of God, on the contrary, conſiders it as the effect of inward hatred, or want of genuine love, to forbear reproof when it is neceſſary, or may be uſeful. I am ſenſible there may, in ſome caſes, be a reſtraint from prudence, agreeably to that caution of Solomon, 'Caſt not your pearls 'before ſwine, leaſt they trample them under 'their feet, and turn again and rent you.' Of this every man muſt judge as well as he can for himſelf; but certainly, either by open reproof, or expreſſive ſilence, or ſpeedy departure from ſuch ſociety, we ought to guard againſt being partakers of other mens ſins.

To this let me add, that if all men are bound in ſome degree, certain claſſes of men are under peculiar obligations to the diſcharge of this duty. Magiſtrates, miniſters, parents, heads of families, and thoſe whom age has rendered venerable, are called to uſe their authority and influence for the glory of God and the good of others. Bad men themſelves diſcover an inward conviction of this, for they are often liberal in their reproaches of perſons of grave characters or religious profeſſion, if they bear with patience the profanity of others. Inſtead of enlarging on the duty of men in authority in general, I muſt particularly recommend this matter to thoſe who have the command of ſoldiers inliſted for the defence of their country.

The

The cause is sacred, and the champions for it ought to be holy. Nothing is more grieving to the heart of a good man, than to hear from those who are going to the field, the horrid sound of cursing and blasphemy; it cools the ardour of his prayers, as well as abates his confidence and hope in God. Many more circumstances affect me in such a case, than I can enlarge upon, or indeed easily enumerate at present; the glory of God, the interest of the deluded sinner, going like a devoted victim, and imprecating vengeance on his own head, as well as the cause itself committed to his care. We have sometimes taken the liberty to forebode the downfal of the British empire, from the corruption and degeneracy of the people. Unhappily the British soldiers have been distinguished among all the nations of Europe, for the most shocking profanity. Shall we then pretend to emulate them in this infernal distinction, or rob them of the horrid privilege? God forbid. Let the officers of the army in every degree remember, that as military subjection, while it lasts, is the most complete of any, it is in their power greatly to restrain, if not wholly to banish, this flagrant enormity.

2. I exhort all who are not called to go into the field, to apply themselves with the utmost diligence to works of industry. It is in your power, by this means, not only to supply the necessities, but to add to the strength of your country. Habits of industry prevailing in a society, not only increase

increaſe its wealth, as their immediate effect, but they prevent the introduction of many vices, and are intimately connected with ſobriety and good morals. Idleneſs is the mother or nurſe of almoſt every vice; and want, which is its inſeparable companion, urges men on to the moſt abandoned and deſtructive courſes. Induſtry, therefore, is a moral duty of the greateſt moment, abſolutely neceſſary to national proſperity, and the ſure way of obtaining the bleſſing of God. I would alſo obſerve, that in this, as in every other part of God's government, obedience to his will is as much a natural mean, as a meritorious cauſe of the advantage we wiſh to reap from it. Induſtry brings up a firm and hardy race. He who is inured to the labour of the field, is prepared for the fatigues of a campaign. The active farmer, who riſes with the dawn, and follows his team or plow, muſt in the end be an overmatch for thoſe effeminate and delicate ſoldiers, who are nurſed in the lap of ſelf-indulgence, and whoſe greateſt exertion is in the important preparation for, and tedious attendence on, a maſquerade, or midnight ball.

3. In the laſt place, ſuffer me to recommend to you frugality in your families, and every other article of expence. This the ſtate of things among us renders abſolutely neceſſary, and it ſtands in the moſt immediate connection both with virtuous induſtry, and active public ſpirit. Temperance in meals, moderation and decency

in

in dress, furniture, and equipage, have, I think, generally been characteristics of a distinguished patriot. And when the same spirit pervades a people in general, they are fit for every duty, and able to encounter the most formidable enemy. The general subject of the preceding discourse has been the wrath of man praising God. If the unjust oppression of your enemies, which withholds from you many of the usual articles of luxury and magnificence, shall contribute to make you clothe yourselves and your children with the works of your own hands, and cover your tables with the salutary productions of your own soil, it will be a new illustration of the same truth, and a real happiness to yourselves and your country.

I could wish to have every good thing done from the purest principles and the noblest news. Consider, therefore, that the Christian character, particularly the self-denial of the gospel, should extend to your whole deportment. In the early times of Christianity, when adult converts were admitted to baptism, they were asked among other questions, Do you renounce the world, its shews, its pomp, and its vanities? I do. The form of this is still preserved in the administration of baptism, where we renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh. This certainly implies not only abstaining from acts of gross intemperance and excess, but a humility of carriage, a restraint

and moderation in all your deſires. The ſame thing, as it is ſuitable to your Chriſtian profeſſion, is alſo neceſſary to make you truly independent in yourſelves, and to feed the ſource of liberality and charity to others or to the public. The riotous and waſteful liver, whoſe craving appetites make him conſtantly needy, is and muſt be ſubject to many maſters, according to the ſaying of Solomon, 'The borrower is ſervant to the 'lender.' But the frugal and moderate perſon, who guides his affairs with diſcretion, is able to aſſiſt in public counſels by a free and unbiaſſed judgment, to ſupply the wants of his poor brethren, and ſometimes, by his eſtate and ſubſtance, to give important aid to a ſinking country.

Upon the whole, I beſeech you to make a wiſe improvement of the preſent threatning aſpect of public affairs, and to remember that your duty to God, to your country, to your families and to yourſelves, is the ſame. True religion is nothing elſe but an inward temper and outward conduct, ſuited to your ſtate and circumſtances in providence at any time. And as peace with God, and conformity to him, adds to the ſweetneſs of created comforts, while we poſſeſs them, ſo in times of difficulty and trial, it is in the man of piety and inward principle, that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the uſeful citizen, and the invincible ſoldier. God grant that in America, true religion and civil liberty may

may be inſeparable, and that the unjuſt attempts to deſtroy the one, may in the iſſue tend to the ſupport and eſtabliſhment of both.

AN ADDRESS TO THE Natives of Scotland, residing in America

Countrymen and Friends,

AS ſoon as I had conſented to the publication of the foregoing ſermon, I felt an irreſiſtible deſire to accompany it with a few words addreſſed to you in particular. I am certain I feel the attachment of country as far as it is a virtuous or laudable principle, perhaps it would be nearer the truth to ſay, as far as it is a natural and pardonable prejudice. He who is ſo pleaſed may attribute it to this laſt when I ſay, that I have never ſeen cauſe to be aſhamed of the place of my birth;

birth; that ſince the revival of arts and letters in Europe, in the cloſe of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth century, the natives of Scotland have not been inferior to thoſe of any other country, for genius, erudition, military proweſs, or any of thoſe accompliſhments which improve or embelliſh human nature. When to this it is added, that ſince my coming to America at an advanced period of life, the friendſhip of my countrymen has been as much above my expectation as deſert; I hope every reader will conſider what is now to be offered, as the effect not only of unfeigned good-will, but of the moſt ardent affection.

It has given me no little uneaſineſs to hear the word Scotch uſed as a term of reproach in the American controverſy, which could only be upon the ſuppoſition that ſtrangers of that country are more univerſally oppoſed to the liberties of America than thoſe who were born in South-Britain, or in Ireland. I am ſenſible that this has been done in ſome news-papers, and contemptible anonymous publications, in a manner that was neither warranted by truth, nor dictated by prudence. There are many natives of Scotland in this country, whoſe oppoſition to the unjuſt claims of Great-Britain has been as early and uniform, founded upon as rational and liberal principles, and therefore likely to be as laſting, as that of any ſet of men whatever. As to Great-Britain itſelf, time has now fully diſcovered that the real friends of

America in any part of that kingdom were very few; and thoſe whoſe friendſhip was diſintereſted, and in no degree owing to their own political factions, ſtill fewer. The wiſe and valuable part of the nation were, and as yet are, in a great meaſure ignorant of the ſtate of things in this country; neither is it eaſy for the bulk of a people to ſhake off their prejudices, and open their eyes upon the great principles of univerſal liberty. It is therefore at leaſt very diſputable, whether there is any juſt ground for the diſtinction between Scots and Engliſh on this ſubject at all.

This diſpute, however, I do not mean to enter upon, becauſe it is of too little moment to find a place here, but ſuppoſing that, in ſome provinces eſpecially, the natives of Scotland have been too much inclined to ſupport the uſurpations of the parent ſtate, I will firſt endeavour to account for it, by aſſigning ſome of its probable cauſes; and then offer a few conſiderations which ſhould induce them to wipe off the aſperſion entirely, by a contrary conduct.

As to the firſt of theſe, I will mention what I ſuppoſe to have been the firſt and radical cauſe, and which gave birth to every other, of the diſaffection of ſome of the natives of Scotland to the juſt privileges of America. What I have in view was, the friends of liberty, in many places of America, taking the part of, and ſeeming to conſider themſelves as in a great meaſure engaged in the ſame cauſe with that very diſtinguiſhed perſon,

John

John Wilkes, Esq: of London. This was done, not only in many writings and news-paper dissertations, but one or two colonies, in some of their most respectable meetings, manifested their attachment to him, and seemed to consider him as their patron and friend. N° 45, which was the most offensive number of a worthless paper, was repeated and echoed, by the most silly and ridiculous allusions to it, through every part of the country, and by many who could not tell what was signified by the term.

It will not be necessary to say much on the prudence of such conduct, because I suppose those who expected Wilkes's mob would pull down the parliament-house, or that there would be insurrections all over the kingdom in behalf of America, are by this time fully satisfied of their mistake. It appears now in the clearest manner, that, till very, lately those who seemed to take the part of America in the British parliament, never did it on American principles. They either did not understand, or were not willing to admit, the extent of our claim. Even the great Lord Chatham's bill for reconciliation would not have been accepted here, and did not materially differ from what the ministry would have consented to. The truth is, the far greatest part of the countenance given in Britain to the complaints of this country, was by those who had no other intention in it than to use them as an engine of opposition to the ministry for the time being. It is true, some of them

them have now learned to reaſon very juſtly, and upon the moſt liberal principles; but their number is not great, and it was not the caſe with any one ſpeaker or writer, whoſe works I have had the opportunity of peruſing, till the very laſt ſtage of the quarrel.

What effect this Wilkiſm (if I may ſpeak ſo) of many Americans may be ſuppoſed to have had upon the minds of gentlemen from Scotland, it is not difficult to explain. That gentleman, and his aſſociates, thought proper to found the whole of their oppoſition to the then miniſtry, upon a contempt and hatred of the Scots nation; and by the moſt illiberal methods, and the moſt ſcandalous falſehoods, to ſtir up a national jealouſy between the northern and ſouthern parts of the iſland. There was not a vile term or hateful idea, which ancient vulgar animoſity had ever uſed, though long union had made them ſcarcely intelligible, which he did not rake up and attempt to bring into credit, by writing and converſation. The conſequence of this is well known. Wilkes and ſome others were burnt in effigy in Scotland; and it produced ſo general an attachment to the king and miniſtry, as has not yet ſpent its force. In theſe circumſtances, is it to be wondered at that many who left Scotland, within the laſt fifteen years, when they heard Wilkes, and thoſe who adhered to him, extolled and celebrated by the ſons of liberty, ſhould be apt to conſider it as an evidence of the ſame ſpirit, and

that

that they were engaged in ſupport of the ſame cauſe. Perhaps we may go a little higher with this remark, in tracing political appearances to their ſource. It is generally ſaid, that the King himſelf has diſcovered a violent, rancorous, perſonal hatred againſt the Americans. If this be true, and I know nothing to the contrary, it may be eaſily accounted for upon the very ſame principles.

I am far from ſuppoſing that this was a good reaſon for any man's being cool to the American cauſe, which was as different from that of Wilkes, as light is from darkneſs. It was indeed doing great diſhonour to the noble ſtruggle, to ſuppoſe it to have any connection with who ſhould be in or out of court favour at London; and therefore it was always my opinion, that thoſe who railed againſt the King and miniſtry only, did not carry the argument home, nor fully underſtand the nature of their own plea. In order to juſtify the American oppoſition, it is not neceſſary to ſhew that the perſons in power have invaded liberty in Britain; it is ſufficient to ſay, that they, with the concurrence of the whole nation, have refuſed to ſuffer it to continue in the colonies.

This leads me to the ſecond part of my deſign, which was to lay before you the reaſons which, I think, ſhould induce every lover of juſtice and of mankind, not only to be a well-wiſher, but a firm and ſtedfaſt friend to America, in this important conteſt.

It

It has been often ſaid, that the preſent is likely to be an important æra to America. I think we may ſay much more; it is likely to be an important æra in the hiſtory of mankind. In the ancient migrations, a new country was generally ſettled by a ſmall, unconnected, and often an ignorant band. The people and the ſoil were alike uncultivated, and therefore they proceeded to improvement by very ſlow degrees; nay, many of them fell back and degenerated into a ſtate vaſtly more ſavage than the people from whence they came. In America we ſee a rich and valuable ſoil, and an extenſive country, taken poſſeſſion of by the power, the learning, and the wealth of Europe. For this reaſon it is now exhibiting to the world a ſcene which was never ſeen before. It has had a progreſs in improvement and population, ſo rapid as no political calculators have been able to aſcertain. I look upon every thing that has been ſaid upon this ſubject to be mere conjecture, except in ſuch places as there has been an actual numeration. When men ſay that America doubles its number in fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five years, they ſpeak by gueſs, and they ſay nothing. In ſome places that may be under or over the truth; but there are vaſt tracks of land that fill every year with inhabitants, and yet the old ſettled places ſtill continue to increaſe.

It is proper to obſerve, that the Britiſh ſettlements have been improved in a proportion far beyond

yond the ſettlements of other European nations. To what can this be aſcribed? Not to the climate; for they are of all climates. Not to the people; for they are a mixture of all nations. It muſt therefore be reſolved ſingly into the degree of Britiſh liberty which they brought from home, and which pervaded more or leſs their ſeveral conſtitutions. It has been repeated to us, I know not how often, by the mercenary ſhort-ſighted writers in favour of ſubmiſſion to, or re-union with Great-Britain, that we have thriven very much in paſt times by our dependence on the mother-country, and therefore we ſhould be loth to part. Theſe writers forget that the very complaint is, that ſhe will not ſuffer us to enjoy our ancient rights. Can any paſt experience ſhew that we ſhall thrive under new impoſitions? I ſhould be glad any ſuch reaſoners would attempt to prove that we have thriven by our dependence, and not by the degree of independence which we have hitherto enjoyed. If we have thriven by our dependence, I conceive it is a neceſſary conſequence that thoſe provinces muſt have thriven moſt which have been moſt dependent. But the contrary is ſelf-evident. Thoſe which have hitherto enjoyed the freeſt form of government, though greatly inferior in ſoil and climate, have yet outſtripped the others in number of people and value of land, merely becauſe the laſt were more under the influence of appointments and authority from home.

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When this is the undeniable ſtate of things, can any perſon of a liberal mind wiſh that theſe great and growing countries ſhould be brought back to a ſtate of ſubjection to a diſtant power? And can any man deny, that if they had yielded to the claims of the Britiſh parliament, they would have been no better than a parcel of tributary ſtates, ruled by lordly tyrants, and exhauſted by unfeeling penſioners, under the commiſſion of one too diſtant to hear the cry of oppreſſion, and ſurrounded by thoſe who had an intereſt in deceiving him. It ought, therefore, in my opinion, to meet with the cordial approbation of every impartial perſon, as I am confident it will of poſterity, that they have united for common defence, and reſolved that they will be both free and independent, becauſe they cannot be the one without the other.

As this meaſure, long foreſeen, has now taken place, I ſhall beg leave to ſay a few things upon it; in which I mean to ſhow, 1. That it was neceſſary. 2. That it will be honourable and profitable. And, 3. That, in all probability, it will be no injury, but a real advantage, to the Iſland of Great-Britain.

1. It had become abſolutely neceſſary. All reconciliation, but upon the footing of abſolute unconditional ſubmiſſion, had been poſitively refuſed by Great-Britain. Unleſs, therefore, the colonies had reſolved to continue in a looſe and broken ſtate, with the name of a government which

which they had taken arms to oppoſe, the ſtep which they have now taken could not have been avoided. Beſides, things had proceeded ſo far, and ſuch meaſures had been taken on both ſides, that it had become impoſſible to lay down a ſcheme by which they ſhould be ſure of our dependence, and we, at the ſame time, ſecured in our liberties. While things continued in their ancient ſtate, there was perhaps a power on the part of each, of which they were hardly conſcious, or were afraid and unwilling to exert. But after the encroachments had been made and reſiſted, to expect any thing elſe than a continual attempt to extend authority on the one hand, and to guard againſt it on the other, is to diſcover very little knowledge of human nature. In ſuch a ſituation, though every claim of America ſhould be yielded, ſhe would ſoon be either in a ſtate of continual confuſion, or abſolute ſubmiſſion. The king of England, living in his Engliſh dominions, would not, and indeed durſt not, aſſent to any act of an American legiſlature, that was, or was ſuppoſed to be hurtful to his Engliſh ſubjects. This is not founded on conjecture, but experience. There is not (at leaſt Dean Swift affirms it) any dependence of Ireland upon England, except an act of the Iriſh parliament, that the king of England ſhall be the king of Ireland. This laſt has a ſeparate independent legiſlature, and in every thing elſe, but the above circumſtance, ſeems to be perfectly free; yet if any man ſhould

aſſert, that the one kingdom is not truly ſubject to the other, he would, in my opinion, know very little of the ſtate and hiſtory of either.

2. A ſtate of independency will be both honourable and profitable to this country. I paſs over many advantages in the way of commerce, as well as in other reſpects, that muſt neceſſarily accrue from it, that I may dwell a little on the great and leading benefit, which is the foundation of all the reſt. We ſhall have the opportunity of forming plans of government upon the moſt rational, juſt, and equal principles. I confeſs I have always looked upon this with a kind of enthuſiaſtic ſatisfaction. The caſe never happened before ſince the world began. All the governments we have read of in former ages were ſettled by caprice or accident, by the influence of prevailing parties or particular perſons, or preſcribed by a conqueror. Important improvements indeed have been forced upon ſome conſtitutions by the ſpirit of daring men, ſupported by ſucceſsful inſurrections. But to ſee government, in large and populous countries, ſettled from its foundation, by deliberate counſel, and directed immediately to the public good of the preſent and future generations, while the people are waiting for the deciſion with full confidence in the wiſdom and impartiality of thoſe to whom they have committed the important truſt, is certainly altogether new. We learn indeed from hiſtory that ſmall tribes and feeble, new ſettlements,

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did ſometimes employ one man of eminent wiſdom, to prepare a ſyſtem of laws for them. Even this was a wiſe meaſure, and attended with happy effects. But, how vaſt the difference, when we have the experience of all paſt ages, the hiſtory of human ſociety, and the well-known cauſes of proſperity and miſery in other governments, to aſſiſt us in the choice?

The proſpect of this happy circumſtance, and the poſſibility of loſing it, and ſuffering the ſeaſon to paſs over, has filled me with anxiety for ſome time. So far as we have hitherto proceeded, there has been great unanimity and public ſpirit. The inhabitants of every province, and perſons of all denominations, have vied with each other in zeal for the common intereſt. But, was it not to be feared that ſome men would acquire over-bearing influence? That human weakneſs and human paſſions would diſcover themſelves, and prevent the finiſhing of what had been ſo happily begun? In the time of the civil wars in England, had they ſettled a regular form of government as ſoon as the parliament had obtained an evident ſuperiority, their liberties would never have been ſhaken, and the Revolution would have been unneceſſary. But by delaying the thing ſo long, they were broken into parties and bewildered in their views, and at laſt tamely ſubmitted, without reſiſtance, to that very tyranny againſt which they had fought with ſo much glory and ſucceſs. For this reaſon I think that

every candid and liberal mind ought to rejoice in the meaſures lately taken through the ſtates of America, and particularly the late declaration of independence, as it will not only give union and force to the meaſures of defence, while they are neceſſary, but lay a foundation for the birth of millions, and the future improvement of a great part of the globe.—I have only further to obſerve,

3. That I am confident the independence of America will, in the end, be to the real advantage of the Iſland of Great-Britain. Were this even otherwiſe, it would be a weak argument againſt the claim of juſtice. Why ſhould the ſecurity or proſperity of this vaſt country be ſacrificed to the ſuppoſed intereſt of an inconſiderable ſpot? But I cannot believe that the miſery and ſubjection of any country on earth, is neceſſary to the happineſs of another. Blind partiality and ſelf-intereſt may repreſent it in this light; but the opinion is deluſive, the ſuppoſition is falſe. The ſucceſs and increaſe of one nation is, or may be, a benefit to every other. It is ſeldom, indeed, that a people in general can receive and adopt theſe generous ſentiments; they are nevertheleſs perfectly juſt. It is induſtry only, and not poſſeſſions, that makes the ſtrength and wealth of a nation; and this is not hindred, but encouraged, provoked, and rewarded by the induſtry of others*.

But

* See David Hume's Eſſay on the jealouſy of trade.

But to leave the general principle, or rather to apply it to the caſe of Great-Britain and America: what profit has the former hitherto received from the latter? And what can it reaſonably expect for the future? Only its trade, and ſuch part of that trade as tends to encourage the induſtry and increaſe the number of the inhabitants of that Iſland. It will be ſaid, they intend to raiſe a large, clear, net revenue upon us, by taxation. It has been ſhewn by many, that all the taxes which they could raiſe, would only ſerve to feed the inſatiable deſire of wealth in placemen and penſioners, to increaſe the influence of the crown, and the corruption of the people. It was by the acquiſition of numerous provinces that Rome haſtened to its ruin. But even ſuppoſing it otherwiſe, and that without any bad conſequence among themſelves, they were to acquire a great addition to their yearly revenue, for every ſhilling they gained by taxes, they would loſe ten in the way of trade. For a trifling addition to the ſums of public money to be applied or waſted by miniſters of ſtate, they would loſe ten times the quantity diſtributed among uſeful manufacturers, the ſtrength and glory of a ſtate. I think this has been ſometimes compared to the difference between draughts of ſpirituous liquors to intoxicate the head or weaken the ſtomach, and cool refreſhing food to give ſoundneſs, health, and vigour to every member of the body.

The trade, then, of America, as ſoon as peace

is ſettled, will be as open to them as ever. But it will be ſaid, they have now an excluſive trade, they will then but ſhare it with other nations. I anſwer, an excluſive trade is not eaſily preſerved, and when it is preſerved, the reſtriction is commonly more hurtful than uſeful. Trade is of a nice and delicate nature; it is founded upon intereſt: it will force its way wherever intereſt leads, and can hardly by any art be made to go in another direction. The Spaniards have an excluſive trade, as far as they pleaſe to confine it, to their own plantations. Do they reap much benefit from it? I believe not. Has it made their own people more induſtrious at home? Juſt the contrary. Does it, in the natural courſe of things, make a people leſs careful to work as well and as cheap as others, to procure voluntary purchaſers, when they know they can ſend their goods to thoſe who are obliged to take them? Does it not both tempt and enable great merchants in the capital, to import from other nations what they can export to ſuch a forced market, to advantage? By this means a conſiderable profit may come into the coffers of a few particulars, while no eſſential ſervice is done to the people, and the ultimate profit is carried to that country where the goods are produced or fabricated. It has been repeatedly ſaid, by political writers in England, that the balance of trade is againſt that country to every nation, excepting Portugal, and their own plantations. I will not

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anſwer for the truth or univerſality of this aſſertion; but if it is true in any meaſure, I will venture to affirm, upon the principles of general reaſon, that the cauſe which produces it is no other than the excluſive trade they have hitherto enjoyed to the American ſettlements.

But the circumſtance which I apprehend will contribute moſt to the intereſt of Great-Britain in American independence is, its influence in peopling and enriching this great continent. It will certainly tend to make the American States numerous, powerful, and opulent, to a degree not eaſily conceived. The great and penetrating Monteſquieu, in his Spirit of Laws, has ſhewn in the cleareſt manner, that nothing contributes ſo much to the proſperity of a people, as the ſtate of ſociety among them, and the form of their government. A free government overcomes every obſtacle, makes a deſart a fruitful field, and fills a bleak and barren country with all the conveniencies of life. If ſo, what muſt be the operation of this powerful cauſe upon countries enjoying, in the higheſt degree, every advantage that can be derived from ſituation, climate, and ſoil? If the trade of America has hitherto been of ſo great benefit to England, how much more valuable may it be when theſe countries ſhall be ſtill more highly improved, if ſhe ſhall continue to enjoy it? This argument is liable to no objection but what may ariſe from the loſs of an excluſive trade, which I have already conſidered. It may be

be added, however, that there is not now, nor ever has been, any averſion in the America n to the people of Great-Britain; ſo that they may be ſure of our trade, if they treat us as well as others; and if otherwiſe, they do not deſerve it.

I might illuſtrate the argument, by ſtating the probable conſequences of a contrary ſuppoſition. If Great-Britain ſhould prevail, or overcome the American ſtates, and eſtabliſh viceroys, with abſolute authority, in every province, all men of ſpirit and lovers of freedom would certainly withdraw themſelves to a corner, if ſuch could be found, out of the reach of tyranny and oppreſſion. The numbers of the people at any rate would ſenſibly decreaſe, their wealth would be ſpeedily exhauſted, and there would remain only a nominal authority over a deſolate country, in return for a vaſt expence laid out in the conqueſt, and in place of a great and profitable trade, by which both nations were made happy. One of the arguments, if they may be called ſo, made uſe of againſt this country, and on which an obligation to obedience has been founded, is taken from the expence they have been at in blood and treaſure for our protection in former wars. This argument has been often anſwered in the fulleſt manner; but if they ſhall continue to urge it, how fearful to think of the obligations we ſhall be under, after this war is finiſhed! Then ſhall we owe them all the ſums which they ſhall have laid out in ſubduing us, and all that we have ſpent in

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attempting to prevent it; all the blood which they ſhall have ſhed in attacking us, and all that we ſhall have ſpilt in our own defence. There is unqueſtionably a loſs to Great Britain, by the one ſide of the account as well as the other; and it tends to ſhow, in the cleareſt manner, the unſpeakable folly, as well as great injuſtice, of the promoters of this war.

Thus I have ſtated to you, though very briefly, the principles on which I think the American cauſe ought to be pleaded, and on which it ought to be eſpouſed and ſupported, by every lover of juſtice and of mankind. But though the general plea in juſtice were leſs clear than it is, there is a light in which the conduct of the oppoſers of it has always appeared to me unreaſonable and ungenerous to the higheſt degree. That reſiſtance to Great-Britain has been determined on, in the moſt reſolute manner, through all the colonies, by a vaſt majority, is not only certain, but undeniable. In the beginning of the controverſy, ſome writers, with an impudence hardly to be paralleled, called the fact in queſtion, attempted to deceive the people in this country, and effectually deceived the people of England, by making them believe, that it was only a few factious and violent men that had engaged in the conteſt. It is not very long ſince a writer had the courage to aſſert, that, "nine tenths of the people of Pennſylvania were againſt independence." The falſehood of ſuch miſrepreſentations is now manifeſt,

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and indeed was probably known from the beginning, by thoſe who deſired to have them believed. Taking this for granted, then, for an inconſiderable minority, whether natives or ſtrangers, to ſet themſelves in oppoſition to the public councils, is contrary to reaſon and juſtice, and even to the very firſt principles of the ſocial life.

If there is any principle that was never controverted upon the ſocial union, it is, that, as a body, every ſociety muſt be determined by the plurality. There was a time when it was not only juſt and conſiſtent but neceſſary, that every one ſhould ſpeak his mind freely and fully of the neceſſity or expediency of reſiſting the authority of Great Britain: but that time is over long ago. The meaſures being reſolved upon, and the conflict begun, one who is barely neuter can ſcarce be forgiven; a ſecret plodding enemy muſt be conſidered as a traitor. Every perſon who continued among us after the deciſive reſolutions formed by all the colonies, ought to be conſidered as pledging his faith and honour to aſſiſt in the common cauſe. Let me try to illuſtrate it by a ſimilar caſe. Suppoſe that a ſhip at ſea ſprings a leak, which expoſes the whole company to the moſt imminent danger of periſhing. Suppoſe a counſel is called of all the perſons on board to determine what port they ſhall endeavour to gain. Then it is not only the right, but the duty of every one to ſpeak his own judgment, and to preſs it upon others by every argument in his

power. Suppoſe a great majority determines to puſh for a certain place, and to go to the pump by turns every quarter of an hour; but that two, or three, or one, if you pleaſe, is of opinion that they ſhould have gone another courſe, becauſe of the wind, current, or any other circumſtance, and that it would be beſt to change hands at the pump only every half hour. All this is well. But if after the determination, this ſame gentleman, becauſe his advice was not followed, ſhould refuſe to pump at all, ſhould ſlily alter the ſhip's courſe, or deaden her way by every means in his power, or even ſhould only, by continual complaints and deſpondent fears, diſcourage others on whoſe activity the common ſafety depended; I deſire to know what treatment he would receive or deſerve? Without doubt he would be thrown over board in leſs time than I have taken to ſtate the caſe. I am not able to perceive the leaſt difference between this ſuppoſition and what takes place in America at the preſent time.

If this argument is juſt with reſpect to every inhabitant of the country, it ought to have ſome additional weight with thoſe who are not natives, and whoſe reſidence is not certain, or has not been long. There is a great degree of indecency in ſuch taking any part againſt what the majority of the inhabitants think to be their intereſt and that of their country. Were they even wrong, their miſtake ſhould be lamented, not reſiſted; on the contrary, it would be the part both of generoſity

neroſity and juſtice to ſuppport them effectually in a conteſt which wiſdom would have declined. We ſee indeed every day melancholy inſtances of a baſe and ſelfiſh temper operating different ways. Many when they do not obtain that rank and honour which their pride and partiality think their due, or if their advice is not followed, immediately renounce the ſervice of their country, and it may go to deſtruction for them. In oppoſition to this, let me recommend the example of the illuſtrious Fabius of Rome. He had given ſtrict orders to all his officers not to engage the enemy, but to keep at a diſtance. Unluckily his lieutenant-general, by his own raſhneſs, got entangled with a part of the army under his command, and was engaged. Fabius, preferring his country's good to fame, rivalſhip, and ſafety, came immediately to his ſupport with all expedition, and thereby gained a glorious and complete victory.

I hope you will take in good part the above reflections, which, I think, contain nothing that is virulent or indecent againſt any man or body of men. They are the effects of judgment and conviction. The Author, as is probably known to many of you, has been perſonally abuſed in newspapers at home for the part he was ſuppoſed to have taken in the American cauſe, which was in ſome degree indeed the motive to this addreſs. He hopes that an honeſt and faithful ſupport of liberty and equal government in this part of the world,

world, will be no juſt reproach to his character, either as a ſcholar, a miniſter, or a chriſtian, and that it is perfectly conſiſtent with an undiminiſhed regard for the country which gave him birth.

The above is ſubmitted to your candid peruſal, by

Gentlemen,

Your ſincere friend, and

Obedient humble ſervant,

The AUTHOR.

SERMON XI.

On the Sin of Scoffing at Things Sacred.

PSALM i. 1.

Bleſſed is the Man that walketh not in the counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of ſinners, nor ſitteth in the ſeat of the ſcornful.

THERE is an old and beaten obſervation, that human nature, in all ages, is the ſame. To this I add, or rather offer, by way of illuſtration of it, that ſin, which bears ſo much ſway in human characters and actions, has been the ſame, in its operation and influence, in all ages, ſince the fall of Adam. For this reaſon the characters drawn in the holy ſcriptures, and particularly the obſervations on human life, contained in the Pſalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, and book of Eccleſiaſtes, are as perfectly adapted to the

the preſent age, as if they were but of yeſterday's date.

As the ten commandments, which are the ſum of the moral law, conſiſt moſtly of prohibitions, the Pſalmiſt, in this paſſage, draws the character of the good man in a negative form, by its oppoſition to the bad. At the ſame time, the danger to which the unwary are expoſed, the enticing and deceitful nature of ſin, and its monſtrous enormity, when arrived at its full height, are couched in the moſt admirable manner; 'Bleſſed is the man that walketh not in the counſel 'of the ungodly;—nor ſtandeth in the way of 'ſinners;—nor ſitteth in the ſeat of the ſcornful'.

It is not agreed among interpreters, who was the author of this Pſalm; and, indeed, it is a matter more of curioſity than moment very critically to enquire. Some think it was the Pſalmiſt David, becauſe of the high eſteem expreſſed in it for the law of God, a thing which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhes his other writings. Others refer it to a later period; and ſuppoſe that Ezra, or ſome other after the captivity, who collected the ſacred hymns of different authors into one volume, prefixed this as a ſort of argument or preface to the whole. It is indeed, a ſummary of all that follow. It plainly contains a character both of good men and bad; the uſual courſe of divine providence towards each of theſe claſſes, as well as the final iſſue of their conduct in the

everlasting happiness of the one, and the everlasting misery of the other.

Even the most cursory reader must observe, that there is a gradation in the expressions of the text, which rise one above another in their strength and energy: nay, it is the opinion of many, that they are chosen with peculiar art, and contain a double, if not a threefold gradation. 1. In the character, beginning with the ungodly, who are without proper impressions of religion, and habitually governed by other principles than the fear of God. Next, sinners, or those who are more openly flagitious, and visibly guilty of gross crimes. And finally, the scornful, who set reproof at defiance, and treat every thing serious and sacred with contempt and disdain. 2. In the communication of others with them, walking; which seems to imply occasional, unforeseen, and transient intercourse;—standing, which seems to indicate a greater degree of approbation and voluntary compliance with their example;—and sitting, which signifies, being fixed and settled in an evil course, and refusing to depart from it.—To this some add the other expressions; the counsel, the way, and the seat; on which I forbear to insist, but proceed to observe,

That we have, in this passage, a most useful and instructive lesson of great moment in every place and age; and peculiarly suited, on several accounts, to the present circumstances of this congregation. It is, therefore, my resolution to discourse

diſcourſe a little, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace, on the three diſtinct branches into which it may be naturally divided.

I. The infectious nature of ſin, or the danger of 'walking in the counſel of the ungodly.

II. The deceitful and hardening nature of ſin, which inſenſibly leads from 'walking in the 'counſel of the ungodly,' to ſtanding in the way 'of ſinners.'

III. The finiſhing ſtage of wickedneſs, the moſt criminal and moſt pernicious character, viz. of the ſcornful, who are bold enough to treat things ſerious and ſacred with deriſion.

Having done this, I ſhall make ſome application of the ſubject, for your inſtruction and direction.

In the firſt place, let us conſider the infectious nature of ſin, or the danger of walking in the counſel of the ungodly. That the ſociety of bad men is highly dangerous to all, but eſpecially to young perſons is indeed a truth which no ſober man will deny, and which hath been often ſet in the ſtrongeſt light by religious and moral writers: it may therefore ſeem unneceſſary to inſiſt upon it. But, my brethren, I am perſuaded, that it fares often with known and common truths, as with common mercies, they are deſpiſed for their cheapneſs. Though their certainty be readily al-

lowed, their uſe and application is, notwithſtanding, or, perhaps, for that very reaſon, in a great meaſure neglected. How ſeldom is it that men make the diſtinction with care, and act upon it with prudence and reſolution; either in their own conduct, or in the diſpoſal of their children. Bear with me, therefore, while I endeavour to impreſs your minds with a ſenſe of your obligation to depart from the ſociety of evil doers, and to preſerve, with the utmoſt ſolicitude, all young perſons under your care, from the mortal contagion.

For the importance and neceſſity of this, you have the concurrent teſtimony of wiſe and good men, in every age and nation: experience hath taught it to the moſt barbarous, as well as the moſt improved and poliſhed people. There is no nation of which hiſtory hath preſerved us any account, but, in their proverbial ſayings, which are the product of time, we find a warning againſt the infection of corrupt ſociety. What dying parent, in his laſt or parting adieu to his children, ever omitted to caution them againſt the ſociety of bad men? nay, doth not daily experience prove this, beyond diſpute, to every one who hath the leaſt degree either of memory or reflection? Is there among you any perſon, who has arrived at the unhappy diſtinction of being known for a profligate? Whenever this happens, thoſe about him are able to mark the progreſs of his corruption, and can even point out

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the perſons, or ſocieties, where he was firſt taught the rudiments of vice, and initiated in the principles of licentiouſneſs and riot. I am none of thoſe who either deny or conceal the original, inherent, univerſal corruption of human nature; and yet I ſcruple not to affirm, that example, inſtruction, and aſſiſtance, are neceſſary to our improvment even in vice. Without this, no ſingle perſon is capable of arriving at that degree of depravity which we have ſometimes occaſion to obſerve.

Whoever would examine into the reaſons, and impreſs his mind with a ſenſe of the danger of corrupt ſociety, eſpecially to youth, may juſt reflect upon the following particulars.

1. We are all by nature prone to ſin. It is the growth of the ſoil, as weeds of the curſed ground. If weeds can hardly be reſtrained by the utmoſt diligence and care of the huſbandman, what an enormous product might he expect, if he would directly apply himſelf to their encouragement and cultivation! Juſt ſo, if by the utmoſt care and attention parents can hardly reſtrain the irregularities of their children, and form them to true piety and goodneſs; what wickedneſs may they not arrive at, if they are delivered over to ſchools of profanity, and ſuffered to form their ſentiments and manners, from thoſe who have long "walked in the ways of "their own hearts, and in the ſight of their own "eyes, without fearing God, or regarding man."

2. Young

2. Young perſons are ignorant and unſuſpicious; ſtrangers to the world, they are alike ignorant of the characters of men, and the effects of vitious courſes. What a prey muſt ſuch be to the artful and inſinuating language of thoſe, who, enſlaved by habit, and wearing the chains of vice, find their chief remaining pleaſure in ſeducing others into the ſame miſerable ſtate! Juſtly is the great enemy of mankind called the deceiver, becauſe he betrayed our firſt parents into rebellion by a lie: and in the ſame way he and all his ſervants continue to paint and varniſh over ſin with falſe colours, that it may be embraced without reluctance, by thoſe who know not that afterwards 'it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like 'an adder.' Need I tell you in what a decent garb ſin is often clothed; and what honourable names it often aſſumes in the world, to gain the eaſier admiſſion? Senſuality and intemperance is ſocial affection, and good fellowſhip: filthy obſcene converſation is but harmleſs mirth and freedom: anger and reſentment is but honour, reſolution, and dignity of mind. In ſhort, the whole tenor and ſtrain of faſhionable converſation is often little elſe than a ſtrong illuſion put upon the mind, to pervert the dictates of reaſon, and evade the reproofs of conſcience. How dangerous ſuch intercourſe to young unwary minds, who are often deeply penetrated with the poiſon, before they ſo much as ſuſpect the deſign of its being

being adminiſtred! It requires no common degree of fortitude and reſolution, as well as no ſmall meaſure of ſpiritual wiſdom, to reſiſt the importunity of ſinners, and unravel the ſubtilty with which they ly in wait to deceive.

3. Vice is uſually baited with pleaſure, of which young perſons are peculiarly ſenſible: their affections of every kind are in the moſt lively and vigorous ſtate. One of the firſt and moſt important leſſons, which parents and guardians muſt teach them, is moderation and reſtraint; whereas the immediate effect of aſſociating with the profane, is not only to ſtrengthen their paſſions by indulgence, but to inſtruct them how to plead in their defence; and above all, to inſpire them with an abhorrence of confinement and rule. From theſe unhappy attachments, theſe moſt pernicious friendſhips it is, that inſtruction however excellent, is unwillingly liſtened to; and the moſt wiſe and gentle government is eſteemed harſh and ſevere. It has been ſometimes obſerved, that perſons ſtrictly and piouſly educated, when they have come into the world, have run headlong into the moſt vitious and abandoned courſe of life. This has been commonly aſcribed to the rigour of their former confinement, and an advice grafted upon it, that parents ſhould be leſs ſevere to their children, leſt they ſhould more than compenſate this early reſtraint, by the liberties which they afterwards aſſume. But though I willingly admit, that every parent ſhould temper

temper his authority with gentleneſs and love; yet I am far from thinking the effect, juſt now mentioned, is aſcribed to its proper cauſe: it is not owing ſo much to the rigour of parental authority, as to young perſons getting into the ſociety of men without principle, and there ſecretly imbibing thoſe vitious deſires, which afterwards they rejoice in an opportunity of gratifying to the full. However ſtrict and ſevere any perſon's education may be, if he comes to maturity of age, before he contracts an intimacy with thoſe who juſtify the commiſſion of ſin, conſcience will have acquired ſo great authority, that all ſolicitation to groſs wickedneſs will be received with abhorence. This opinion is ſupported by a fact, which I imagine I have obſerved, that the children of pious parents, who are betrayed into vitious courſes, are almoſt always ſuch as have been moſt early removed from their immediate inſpection.

4. The danger of corrupt ſociety to young perſons appears, from their being expoſed to ridicule and ſcorn, which is of all other trials hardeſt for them to bear. I ſhall have occaſion, on the third general head, to ſpeak more fully on this ſubject; but in the mean time, it is certain, that a ſenſe of ſhame is ſtrong in young perſons in general, and that ridicule is the uſual weapon, by which adepts in vice aſſault the cauſe of truth and piety; by which indeed they commonly endeavour to deſtroy all regard to decency and order. It is

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lamentable to think, how often perſons of excellent capacity, and admirable diſpoſitions, have been led aſtray by the abuſe of this moſt amiable quality, a ſenſe of ſhame.

From all theſe conſiderations, we need not be ſurpriſed at the frequent and ſtrong cautions given in the word of God, upon this ſubject: 'He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe; 'but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed. '——Whoſo keepeth the law, is a wiſe ſon: 'but he that is a companion of riotous men, 'ſhameth his father.' But there is nothing more moving than that earneſt and pathetic exhortation; 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, 'and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it; 'paſs not by it; turn from it and paſs away.' The wiſe man's inſiſting upon this important counſel, and the iteration of the expreſſions, ſerves to convey, in the ſtrongeſt manner, a ſenſe of the certain ruin of thoſe who neglect to obſerve it.

II. Let us now proceed to conſider the hardening nature of ſin, which leads from 'walking in 'the counſel of the ungodly, to ſtanding in the 'way of ſinners.' Upon this, as on the former particular, I may obſerve, it is a known and beaten ſubject, on which it is eaſy to ſay things ſtrong, but difficult to ſay any thing new. There are ſeveral juſt remarks upon it, or ſtriking ſimilitudes, which have been handed down from the earlieſt ages; and were probably the firſt fruits of

of human experience. The little that I am at preſent to repeat or add, ſhall be divided into two parts: 1. The gradual and inſenſible progreſs of ſin, which leads the ſinner on from one ſtep to another, till he is irrecoverably loſt. 2. The ſtrength and power of inveterate habit.

1. The inſenſible progreſs of ſin. It is wonderful by what artful methods, what plauſible pretences, and what ſlow degrees, ſin makes its firſt approaches. Let ſome of thoſe perſons who are now loſt to all ſenſe of duty, or of ſhame, reflect, if poſſible, with what horror they would once have thought of the practices, which at preſent they are not able to forſake. Every ſin, how ſmall ſoever, opens a paſſage for the admiſſion of multitudes of others; breaks the reſtraint of conſcience; habituates and emboldens the ſinner. The antients were wont to ſay, that the way of ſin is down-hill: every ſtep a man takes on this declivity, accelerates his motion, ſo that it becomes more and more difficult, and at laſt impoſſible, to ſtop his courſe. This is what the apoſtle Paul had in his view, when he gave this excellent precept to the Chriſtian Hebrews; 'But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'to-day, leſt any of you be hardened through 'the deceitfulneſs of ſin.' We may ſay of ſin, in general, what Solomon ſays of ſtrife, 'The be-'ginning of it is like the letting out of water.' If you watch againſt the beginning of ſin, you may hope to prevail; but if you once grant it indulgence

dulgence, it will eſtabliſh and increaſe its own power. To attempt then to ſtop its progreſs, is like endeavouring to gather together a flood of water, after you have, with your own hands, opened the ſluices which have cauſed it to overflow.

2. To the inſenſible progreſs of ſin, add the ſtrength and power of inveterate habit. This is repreſented to us in the ſtrongeſt terms in ſcripture, where the changing of an inveterate habit is compared to a natural impoſſibility: 'Can the 'Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his 'ſpots? then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil.'

As we may receive many uſeful moral leſſons from the viſible creation and the courſe of nature; ſo this in particular, of the force of habit, is, if I may ſpeak ſo, written in the moſt legible characters, and repeated in every page of both. A ſtone, which has long continued in one place, makes itſelf a bed, and is with great difficulty removed: a plant or tree that has long been confined to one poſition, or made to grow in a particular ſhape, will ſeldom ever receive any other. This is alſo the caſe with our own bodily frame. Particular poſtures or motions to which we have been early habituated, can ſcarcely be altered by the utmoſt attention, and the ſtrongeſt inclination of the will: the obſtinacy is ſtill greater in all habits where deſire and affection have place. It is eaſy to ſee every day the violent attachment men have to employments and pleaſures, however

trifling in themſelves, to which they have been long accuſtomed. But it is greateſt of all in ſinful habits, becauſe in them the force of cuſtom is added to the original ſtrength of natural corruption.

Both the above particulars may be illuſtrated, by obſerving how much habit and example together operate to the improvement and perfection of guilt, in large and populous cities. There we may often find ſo aſtoniſhing a degree of wickedneſs of every ſort, as it is mortifying to think that human nature ſhould be capable of; there we may find perſons who will perpetrate calmly and ſedately, what would ſurprize a leſs knowing ſinner ſo much as to hear of. And what pity is it, that there ſhould be found ſome, who, during their occaſional reſidence in places of great reſort, lay down their innocence, inſtead of their ruſticity; and bring home no other accompliſhment but an inſolence and boldneſs of countenance in the commiſſion of ſin! That inſtructed in the principles, as well as habituated to the practice of impiety, they are not content with doing evil, but diſcover an incredible induſtry and aſſiduity in deceiving and ſeducing others! And ſhall I not add, what pity is it, that ſome, inſtead of improving and adorning their minds by application to ſtudy, or ſtoring them with uſeful knowledge, do more than loſe their time, by drinking in the poiſon of infidel writings? Inſtead of fitting themſelves to diſcharge the duties of public

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or private life with propriety and dignity, they only acquire the unhappy talent of setting their minds at ease in the commission of sin, and make large additions to their own natural depravity of heart.

III. Let us consider the finishing stage of wickedness, the most criminal and the most pernicious character, viz. that of the scornful, who are bold enough to treat things serious and sacred with derision.

This part of the subject, my brethren, merits your particular attention, and naturally divides itself into these two branches: 1st, The sin and danger of it to the persons who are guilty of it. 2dly, The unhappy influence it hath in polluting others.

1. The sin and danger of it to the guilty persons. Whoever will consider the state of mind from which such derision must flow, will immediately perceive that it implies the highest degree of profaneness, and impiety. It is such an audacious attack upon the majesty of the living God, as must strike every thinking person with astonishment and horror. One of the first principles of all religion is reverence for the Deity, and for every thing that hath a visible relation to him. This we find written upon the conscience, in general, even of the most blinded heathens. The common and trivial use of the name of God is prohibited under the severest sanctions in the

oracles of truth. We find alſo ſome inſtances there, of mere irreverence being puniſhed in a very terrible manner. The angelic hoſts, though perfectly pure and holy, are yet repreſented as deeply penetrated with a ſenſe of the extreme diſproportion between uncreated excellence, and created weakneſs, and filled with the higheſt veneration of him who only is Holy: 'In the year 'that King Uzzia died, I ſaw alſo the Lord ſit-'ting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his 'train filled the temple. Above it ſtood the ſe-'raphims: each one had ſix wings, with twain 'he covered his face, and with twain he covered 'his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one 'cried unto another, and ſaid, holy, holy, holy, 'is the Lord of hoſts, the whole earth is full of 'his glory.' It may ſeem unneceſſary or improper to add, and yet it gives me pleaſure that I can do it with truth, the ſame thing has evidently diſtinguiſhed ſome of the beſt and greateſt men on earth. We are well informed, that ſome of the greateſt enquirers into nature, as they grew in years, and encreaſed in the knowledge of the works of God, did alſo viſibly grow in an awe and reverence of their Almighty Maker. Of one in particular, it is ſaid, that he never mentioned the name of God without a ſenſible pauſe in his diſcourſe. After this, what can we think of any poor creature, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, being guilty of contempt and ſcorn of the name, attributes, works, or worſhip of God!

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There is a remarkable difference between ſins of this kind, and many other ſins which are, notwithſtanding, very heinous and aggravated in the ſight of God. Into many other ſins of a very groſs nature, a man may be hurried by the violence of paſſion, or betrayed by the ſuddenneſs of temptation; but, if I miſtake not, ſcorn of things ſacred muſt always be a deliberate crime: the ſin cannot be committed without a good deal of compoſure and preſence of mind: reaſon is not overborne, as in other caſes, by appetite; but reaſon itſelf (if the perverted gift of God in ſuch perſons may be called ſo) is principal in the guilt. A ſcorner is never tempted, properly ſpeaking, but by theſe acts and exerciſes of religion, which ſhould excite the veneration of all, and do excite the veneration of many, not excepting ſome of the moſt profligate.

Contempt of things ſacred is an entire victory over conſcience. In many caſes men ſin with ſome reluctance: it is not ſo much their choice, as they are over-born by the ſtrength of corruption, and vitiate the peace of their minds, to gratify the demands of luſt: hence remorſe often ſucceeds the indulgence; and though real reformation does not take place, yet it lays the ſinner under frequent and conſiderable reſtraints. But in treating things ſacred with ſcorn, the mind is wholly at eaſe; and finds its pleaſure in the very impiety itſelf. The truth is, ſo entire is the victory over conſcience, that nothing but ſettled atheiſm and infidelity can be guilty of it, accord-

ing to that juſt expreſſion of the pſalmiſt, 'Where-
'fore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath
'ſaid in his heart, thou wilt not require it.'

It is alſo an entire victory over ſhame: this is commonly the laſt reſtraint that ſinners overthrow. Many are confined and kept in awe by fear of man, long after they have caſt off the fear of God. From the ſhamefulneſs of ſin, religion preſerves ſome degree of credit, even where a great plurality is in the oppoſite intereſt. For this reaſon the prophet Jeremiah mentions it as a great aggravation of the ſins of his countrymen, that they were loſt to all ſenſe of ſhame: 'Were
'they aſhamed when they had committed abo-
'mination? nay, they were not at all aſhamed,
'neither could they bluſh; therefore they ſhall
'fall among them that fall; at the time that I
'viſit them, they ſhall be caſt down ſaith the
'Lord?' But it is not evident, that ſcorners are deſtitute of ſhame? They have indeed, not only extinguiſhed it in themſelves, but the manifeſt deſign of their converſation is to deſtroy it in the minds of others.

I need add nothing further to ſhew the guilt and danger of perſons of this character, but putting you in mind of the rank which it holds in ſeveral catalogues of crying ſins in the holy ſcriptures, and the awful judgments of God which are denounced againſt it. The prophet Ezekiel, in enumerating the ſins of Jeruſalem, among many enormities, hath this; 'Thou haſt deſpiſed mine

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'holy things, and profaned my Sabbaths.' And the prophet Isaiah, 'Now, therefore, hear the 'word of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule 'this people which is in Jerusalem.—For the 'Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall 'be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he 'may do his work, his strange work; and bring 'to pass his act, his strange act. Now therefore 'be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong; 'for, I have heard from the Lord God of hosts, 'a consumption even determined upon the whole 'earth.' See also the state of things in Jerusalem, immediately before the Babylonish captivity: 'But they mocked the messengers of God, and 'despised his words, and misused his prophets, 'until the wrath of the Lord arose against his 'people, till there was no remedy.'

2. How unhappy is the influence of this character upon others! As it is highly criminal, it is pernicious in the same proportion. Considered only as an example, it must have dangerous effects: many sins shun the light; and are, by those that commit them, concealed with the utmost care. When that is the case, whatever they may be to the guilty person, they are far from being so dangerous to the public, as those crimes that are not only often visible, but done on purpose to be seen. Now, scoffers at things sacred must always be an example, as the crime cannot be committed alone; and, indeed, they often aspire at a kind of character for despising religion, and

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would be greatly mortified, were their accomplishments of this kind hidden from the world.

Neither is it merely a common example: scoffers are not only barely sinners, they are advocates for sin: it is their constant study to break the restraints of conscience, and weaken every moral obligation in others, as well as in themselves. This too they endeavour to effect in the most agreeable manner: contempt of religion makes a part of their social mirth; and these two things are soon looked upon by the unwary youth as so inseparable, that the one is quite tasteless and insipid, unless it is seasoned by the other.

It deserves particular consideration on this subject, that scoffing at things sacred is apt to give natural modesty, and the sense of shame in young persons, a wrong and contrary turn. Modesty is the strongest natural fence to virtue. We find notwithstanding, very frequently, that persons of great natural modesty have not courage sufficient to profess or practice what conscience dictates to be their duty. How unhappy is it when so excellent a preservative from vice is thus quite perverted, and has an opposite effect! All history is full of the powerful effects of a sense of shame, both in doing good and evil. It breaks the strongest of all natural attachments: it is not to be overcome by the severest laws, though fortified with the most terrible sanctions. Now, as it needs no proof, that scoffing at sacred things

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tends to pervert the sense of shame, it must have the greatest and most immediate effect in bringing on a general dissolution of manners.

The malignant influence of profane scorn is not confined to young persons, there being very few of any character who are not hurt by it in a most sensible manner. Would you be convinced of this? How rarely do we find any possessed of a determined courage and resolution in opposing fashionable crimes! How unwilling are the best to suffer shame for adhering to their duty! What a variety of efforts will be made to escape it! Contempt is disagreeable in any rate; and it is intolerable to pride, some remains of which, capable of being irritated, are to be found in the very best men on earth. For this reason, the most established Christians do carefully shun all unnecessary society with wicked men, knowing how difficult it is to avoid sin in one shape or other. If such is the case with the best, how dangerous must the society of scorners be to all who are able to bear them; but especially to those who have pleasure in them.

It will not be improper here to observe, that one great reason why scorn and ridicule is so hurtful to religion, is, that it attacks things sacred through the medium of human weakness. True piety and virtue is in itself so venerable an object, that it is not possible to render it ridiculous, but by misrepresentation: however, as it is always, in this world, attended with human infirmity

firmity, this affords a handle to profane perſons to load it with reproach. Their ſucceſs, in this unhappy deſign, is no greater than may naturally be expected: few are able to diſtinguiſh between a perſon and his cauſe, nor, indeed, is it poſſible to attack the one, without wounding the other. It evidently appears, that it is impoſſible to treat religious perſons in general, or the expreſſions, forms, and rites commonly appropriated to religious worſhip, with ſcorn; and not, at the ſame time, bring religion itſelf into contempt.

I do not mean by this to plead for approbation, or even indulgence, to any indecency, by which folly or vanity may abuſe or diſgrace the worſhip of God: far from it. I think every thing of that kind ought to be reproved with ſeverity, and oppoſed with reſolution: but I contend, that it is infinitely more proper to treat it with abhorrence and deteſtation, than with ſcorn. Whoever will give himſelf this liberty, may eaſily find an opportunity, from the weakneſs inſeparable from humanity, to throw off that reverence for God and his ſervice, which it ought to be his chief ſolicitude to preſerve and improve. There are many whoſe viſible weakneſs is to be lamented; and, perhaps, there is no human character at all ſo perfectly decent in every reſpect but, by imitation, and a little aggravation, it may be rendered ridiculous.

Let it alſo be conſidered, that it requires far leſs comprehenſion of mind to expoſe the folly and

and weakneſs of others, or even to invent plauſible falſehoods, and miſrepreſent them, than to reaſon with juſtneſs and propriety on the moſt common ſubjects. A very ſmall degree of ability is ſufficient to accompliſh a ſcoffer, who is not reſtrained by any ſenſe of duty. Nor is this to be wondered at; for there is always a ſufficient number, to whoſe underſtandings the moſt vile and miſerable performance is perfectly adapted.

In ſupport of all this, I could adduce many examples, abundantly known and familiar; but, for certain reaſons, I ſhall only mention a very celebrated inſtance from antiquity. Socrates was certainly the wiſeſt and the beſt man of all the heathens, whoſe characters have been tranſmitted to us. His behaviour was ſuch, as not only deſerved, but ſeemed fit to command the eſteem and veneration of all who knew him; yet was this worthy man ſucceſsfully turned into ridicule, by a perſon, whoſe writings, which have come down to us, are to the laſt degree mean and contemptible. Nor was the effect merely tranſient; for, in the opinion of many, this contempt paved the way for the hatred which his enemies ſoon raiſed againſt him, and which brought him to his death.

I proceed now, in the laſt place, to make ſome improvement of what has been ſaid: and with this view ſuffer me to apply the truths above illuſtrated by giving you ſome advice and direction

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under the three following characters, one or more of which will include every person who now hears me.

1. To those who are young; in that lovely, precious, dangerous season of life, of all others the fittest for learning what is good, and unhappily prone to learn or imitate what is evil. My dear children, this is not the first of many times I have addressed instruction particularly to you, and I pray that God may open your hearts to receive it. Let me beseech you, first of all, to learn this important lesson, to distrust yourselves, be sensible of your inexperience, and be persuaded of your danger, from the admonitions of others. The greatest evidence you can give of real knowledge, is to be sensible of your ignorance; and of true wisdom, to be willing to learn; the solicitude and concern of your parents or other relations, to preserve you from the destructive paths of vice, is from their certain knowledge of what you are now unwilling to believe. Above all things, shun as the pestilence, the society of profane scorners. Lost to all sense of piety, seared in their consciences, and enslaved to their lusts, they will do all in their power to destroy a rising sense of religion in your minds: 'While they 'promise you liberty, they themselves are the 'servants of corruption. Think upon eternity approaching: no man can foresee or foretell to you now, whether your time on earth shall be long or short; whether you shall have much prosperity

penury, or many trials in the present world; but as the blessing of God is the best ingredient in all temporal mercies, so being at peace with him is the best support under suffering, and the only preparation for death.

But all the decisive arguments in favour of life are drawn from this present life, suffer me to plead the cause of piety and truth in this respect. I am afraid, that true religion is the way to health, peace, opulence and public esteem. Hear the wisest of mere men: 'Length of days is in wisdom's right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.' Do not look only on those libertines who are in the beginning or middle of their course, whose spirits are lively, and their vigour yet unimpaired: look on the few elder practitioners. These were the good-fellows and social spirits of a former period: their companions were cut off in the middle of their days, and they remain as beacons for your instruction and warning. Do you see them fallen in their deportment, mean in their attire, and despised by the world itself; their faces bloated with intemperance, and their miserable offspring pale with hunger, or crippled by neglect? these are the terrible fruits of midnight rioting. They were once as merry in their cups, as ready with their jests, and as great despisers of Sabbaths, and sermons, of whining and praying, as any of their more

ſprightly ſucceſſors, who are in the high road to the ſame deſpicable end.

My dear friends, when you perceive any one ſtirring up your averſion to parental authority, and teaching you to deſpiſe the troubleſome admonitions of miniſters and mothers, know that he is enticing you to the ruin of ſoul, body, and eſtate. Hear again the wiſe man, or rather the Spirit of God ſpeaking by him: 'Hear then, my ſon, and 'be wiſe, and guide thine heart in the way: be 'not amongſt wine-bibbers, amongſt riotous eat-'ers of fleſh; for the drunkard and the glutton 'ſhall come to poverty, and drowſineſs ſhall 'clothe a man with rags; hearken unto thy father 'that begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy mother 'when ſhe is old. The eye that mocketh at his 'father, and deſpiſeth to obey his mother, the 'ravens of the valley ſhall pick it out, and the 'young eagles ſhall eat it.'

Do you indeed think, that any of your looſe companions, with all their profeſſions of friendſhip and attachment, have the ſame concern for your true intereſt that a parent has; or the ſame judgment to diſcern it? You may eſteem it as a favour when you are aſſiſted in the indulgence of your pleaſures, and your irregular courſes are concealed from the knowledge of your relations; but it is in truth the greateſt injury that can poſſibly be done you: it is often diſtreſſing to thoſe of riper years and more experience, to obſerve how difficult it is to perſuade young perſons of eaſy

eaſy tempers and warm affections, of the danger of aſſociating with profligates. We reckon it hard that you will not believe that they are worthleſs, upon our teſtimony; but muſt learn it from your own fatal experience. Believe it, there is no true friendſhip but what is founded on the principles of piety and virtue: and if you confide in thoſe of a different character, you will ſooner or later be rewarded with treachery and falſehood; and indeed the ſooner, the better; for their friendſhip is infinitely more hurtful than any effects of their diſpleaſure. Again therefore, let me beſeech the younger part of my audience, who have not yet themſelves thrown off all regard to decency, to give up all friendſhip with, and avoid the ſociety of, thoſe who have. It is uſually a hard ſacrifice, I confeſs; but neceſſary to your preſervation from the moſt deſtructive courſes. What ſignifies the ſcorn or reſentment of a few hardened wrerches, compared to the peace of your own minds, the heart-felt pleaſure you will give to every real friend, your comfort and happineſs in this life, and the well-grounded hope of a bleſſed immortality?

2. Let me ſhortly addreſs myſelf to parents, or others who are entruſted with the education of youth. And, oh that I could make you ſenſible of the importance and difficulty of your charge! There are many directions, which might be given you with reſpect to education in general; but I chooſe to confine my thoughts at preſent to what

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is ſuggeſted by the occaſion and ſubject of this diſcourſe. Let it, therefore, be your care, to preſerve your children, as much as poſſible, from the company and converſation of profane perſons, eſpecially thoſe who are tainted with infidelity; and who, as its natural conſequence, treat the exerciſes of piety with contempt and ſcorn. To ſuffer this, when you can hinder it, is treating their ſouls in the ſame manner, as you would do their bodies, if you placed doſes of ſweetened poiſon in every corner of the houſe. You will daily perceive how children are formed by imitation, in their temper and manners: they muſt bear a reſemblance to thoſe from whom they receive their firſt impreſſions; but if this is the caſe in general, how much more muſt they embrace the principles, and imitate the practice of their companions in pleaſure?

This caution is ſo neceſſary, that where counſel and intreaty are not ſufficient to procure compliance, authority ought to be interpoſed. Mere authority indeed will be very ineffectual; and therefore I muſt particularly recommend to you an early attention to your childrens opinion and judgment: they ſoon form a judgment, and will give early marks of approbation and averſion of perſons and characters. Do your utmoſt to make them eſteem religion, as the greateſt happineſs to every perſon, and the moſt amiable part of every character. Make them ſenſible, from your conduct, that it is not only your ſincere choice, but greateſt

greateſt delight. It is very fatal to them, when they are led to look upon it as a burden or conſtraint. Habituate them early to conſider all other qualities as good for nothing, when piety is wanting; and a perſon of a truly Chriſtian converſation as worthy of the higheſt eſteem, whatever be his ſtation or circumſtances in other reſpects. Remember it makes a part of the character of a good man, as drawn by the pſalmiſt David; 'in whoſe eyes a vile perſon is deſpiſed, 'but he honoureth them that fear the Lord.' I am perſuaded, that many, who truly fear God themſelves, are inadvertently guilty of a great miſtake in this particular: they diſcover unhappily too much of their admiration or envy of the natural advantages of others, independent of their moral character. Dreſs, furniture, and wealth, are looked upon as diſtinguiſhing advantages; and children are often ſuffered to indulge themſelves in mockery and deriſion; even where deformity, poverty, awkwardneſs, and things perfectly innocent in themſelves, are the only objects of their ſcorn. Intellectual abilities alſo, comprehenſion of mind, and ſprightlineſs of fancy are commonly much the objects of eſteem; and young perſons are inſenſibly led to admire theſe natural qualities, without at all conſidering to what purpoſes they are applied. This muſt neceſſarily have a fatal effect; and therefore parents ſhould endeavour, as much as poſſible, to preſerve upon their own minds, and inſpire their

children with, an eſteem of true piety, and a horror and averſion at a vicious character, whatever advantage may happen to accompany it.

If due care is taken betimes in this reſpect, I am perſuaded it will, in a great meaſure, prevent the danger ariſing from the example or ſolicitation of the patrons of impiety. Their chief ſucceſs depends on their real character's lying concealed, till it is ſafe and proper to avow it. They inſtil the principles of irreligion, as a wiſe man would do the moſt ſacred truths, by little and little, as their diſciples are able to bear them, and always do it under the diſguiſe of pleaſure. There is nothing more different than the converſation and carriage of a libertine, in the preſence of thoſe of whom he ſtands in awe, and among his ſelect companions; and even theſe laſt are but gradually initiated into the concluding and horrid myſteries of profanity and blaſphemy. Young minds therefore ſhould be early formed to ſuch a taſte, as to look for piety and virtue, before they will give their approbation or affection to any human accompliſhments. Were this the caſe, they would not be ſo often betrayed by ſpecious appearances, and drawn in, by degrees, firſt, to ſuffer; then, to imitate; and, at laſt, to delight in the moſt vicious practices.

While I am giving you theſe directions, I cannot help obſerving, that you may ſee the great neceſſity of wiſdom and prudence in the religious education of children. Apply yourſelves to it with

with diligence. It is an extenſive and difficult, but, at the ſame time, a noble, uſeful, delightful ſtudy. 'And if any man lack wiſdom, let him 'aſk of God, who giveth to all men liberally, 'and upbraideth not.'

I ſhall now cloſe this diſcourſe with a few words to profeſſing Chriſtians in general.

My Brethren, when vice rears up its head, and appears with inſolence and boldneſs, as it will certainly affect every good man with concern, ſo it is of great importance what treatment it meets with from the public. If it paſſes without notice, we may conclude, that corruption hath deeply infected the whole maſs. If men are afraid or aſhamed to expreſs their indignation at it, we may conclude the conſpiracy is formidable; and that the intereſt of truth and piety is greatly on the decline. There are many, who, in caſes of groſs ſcandal, rather chooſe to keep themſelves at eaſe, by forbearance and indulgence to the guilty, than run the hazard of provoking their reſentment, by an honeſt declaration of their real ſentiments. Nor is it ſeldom to be obſerved, that the very perſons who do leaſt in their own ſphere, for ſtemming the tide of profanity, are the firſt and loudeſt in complaining of the negligence of magiſtrates or paſtors, in inflicting public puniſhments or cenſures.

Whilſt, therefore, I am endeavouring, in ſome meaſure, to diſcharge my own duty, I muſt alſo put you in mind of yours. It is evidently the du-

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ty of all who profeſs to fear God, to abſtain from the ſociety of thoſe who are groſsly profane, without diſcovering any ſenſe of penitence or ſorrow. The truth is, I ought rather to make this a mark of true religion, and affirm, that all good men will do ſo; than inform them that they ſhould. There muſt be a likeneſs of diſpoſition among familiar friends. Had you that abhorrence of impiety that you ought to have, you would count the ſociety of impious perſons a ſtain and reproach to your own characters. Of this I am able to give a very ſtrong, and, at the ſame time, a plain and familiar proof. Were any perſon known to be guilty of theft and diſhoneſty, or any fault that is odious and diſgraceful in the world, every one would reckon his intimate companions almoſt, if not to the ſame degree, as abandoned as himſelf. The ſame thing will certainly hold as to profanity or licentiouſneſs; though indeed it carries in it a melancholy proof, that ſins againſt piety or purity are far from being held in the ſame abhorrence as what endangers our ſubſtance or temporal intereſt. I muſt, however, here beg of you, to attend to a ſingular and very ſtrong paſſage of the epiſtle to the Romans. The apoſtle Paul cloſes his deſcription of the profane world in the following terms: 'who knowing the judgment of God, (that they 'which commit ſuch things are worthy of death) 'not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them 'that do them.' I have looked into the original, and find the words juſtly tranſlated; and you ſee,

ſee, from the conſtruction of the ſentence, the apoſtle repreſents having pleaſure in ſenſual and wicked men, as implying a depravity of character ſuperior even to that of ſenſuality itſelf.

But as aſſociating with the profane is a mark of profanity, ſo every degree of countenance given to them, by perſons of entire character, is a ſenſible injury to the public. It ſerves to put honour upon vice, and in part to deliver it from that juſt reproach which ought to be the puniſhment of the guilty, and a warning to others not to tread in their ſteps. I have, on ſeveral occaſions, obſerved, that the preſent period or ſtate of things, in this place and congregation, demands the greateſt concern for the public intereſt of religion. Growing in numbers, and growing, I hope, in wealth, as the effect of your own and your fathers induſtry, you are in danger of the introduction of a worldly ſpirit by the riſing generation. This every good man ought, with the utmoſt prudence and reſolution, to oppoſe; particularly by doing all in his power to preſerve the honour and reſpect due to true religion, and treating with contempt every open enemy to that important intereſt. I ſincerely wiſh you improved, and poſſeſſed of every accompliſhment that is truly valuable; but beware of that falſe politeneſs, which conſiſts in little elſe than an oppoſition to religion and ſobriety. And, indeed I am afraid we ſhall not ſoon attain to any other; at leaſt, not by the help of thoſe, who as they ſet religion at

defiance,

defiance, ſo are equally ſtrangers to that elegance and ſenſe of decency which diſtinguiſhes perſons of higher rank.

The worſt enemies of ſinners are thoſe who treat them with indulgence, ſo long as they continue to juſtify or to palliate their offences. Nothing ſerves to harden them more, than when no notice is taken of their crimes; and they find themſelves juſt as generally, and as well received, as if they had done no evil. On the other hand, when they perceive the deep concern of others on their account, it is an excellent mean of bringing them to ſerious reflection, and inducing them to tremble at themſelves. Wherefore, my beloved hearers, let me beſeech you to preſerve your horror of ſin, notwithſtanding the boldneſs of ſinners. Do every thing in your own power to reclaim the offenders. Be earneſt in your ſupplications to almighty God, that he would ſnatch them as brands from the burning, and raiſe them up as trophies of his victorious grace. But while they continue in their enmity to God, forget not, on your own account, the apoſtolic counſel; 'have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but 'rather reprove them.'

SERMON

SERMON XII.

ON

Chriſtian Magnanimity*.

1 Theſſ. ii. 12. *That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory.*

THE preſent ſtate was intended to be, and I think muſt, by every perſon of reflection, be admitted to be a continual trial of the faith and conſtancy of a Chriſtian. It is therefore a duty we

* It ſeems proper to acquaint the public with the reaſon and intention of this publication. It had been the cuſtom, in the college of New-Jerſey, from its firſt eſtabliſhment, that the preſident ſhould preach a ſermon on the Lord's day preceding commencement, for the benefit of young perſons in general,

we owe to others in general, but in a ſpecial manner, the elder to the younger, to give them faithful warning of the temptations and dangers, to which they muſt, of neceſſity, be expoſed, if they mean to walk in the paths of piety and virtue. It hath often occurred to me, in meditating on this ſubject, that as falſe money is moſt dangerous, when it is likeſt to the true, ſo thoſe principles, and that character, which approach the neareſt to true religion, if notwithſtanding they

neral; and in the end, addreſs a particular exhortation to the ſeniors of that year, who were to receive the firſt degree in the arts, and leave college. This cuſtom was very much approved by the author of the following ſermon and addreſs, on his taking charge of the college, and therefore regularly continued. For ſeveral years, the addreſs was founded upon, and had a particular relation to whatever had been the ſubject of the preceding diſcourſe. But in the year 1775, when the war with Britain was actually begun, and every thing ſeemed to breathe the ſpirit of defence, he choſe Chriſtian Magnanimity, as the ſubject of the diſcourſe; and not knowing what might be the event of the important conteſt, he thought it adviſeable to make a collection, or ſummary, of all the advices that had been given to the young gentlemen for their conduct in life, in different years, under diſtinct heads. This produced the one now publiſhed; which, with ſome variations and additions, has been delivered to the claſs annually, ſometimes the Sabbath preceding commencement, and ſometimes on commencement-day, when the exerciſes left room for it. The author having now introduced every thing

they are eſſentially different from it, will be moſt ready to impoſe on an uncautious and unſuſpecting mind. Therefore, if there is ſuch a thing as a worldly virtue, a ſyſtem of principles and duty, dictated by the ſpirit of the world, and the ſtandard of approbation or blame with the men of the world, and if this is at bottom, eſſentially different from and ſometimes directly oppoſed to the ſpirit of the goſpel, it muſt be of all others, the moſt dangerous temptation, to perſons of a liberal education and an ingenuous turn of mind.

This, if I am not miſtaken, is really the caſe. There are ſome branches of true religion which

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thing that he thought of ſufficient importance to find a place in it, and the length of the piece having become ſuch as not eaſily to admit of its being all pronounced in one day, eſpecially the day of commencement, he has been induced to publiſh it together with the ſermon which accompanied it, when firſt prepared and reduced to a regular ſyſtem. He the more willingly agreed to this, that ſeveral inſtances have happened, of gentlemen, educated at this college, ſignifying, that they thought they had received advantage, in many ſituations, by recollecting the advices given them at their graduation for their conduct in life. He therefore now puts the whole into their hands, and into thoſe of all who are willing to accept of it, as the fruit of long experience and conſiderable attention to the courſe of human affairs, earneſtly wiſhing that they may be uſeful and eminent as citizens, ſcholars, patriots; and at the ſame time beſeeching them, that in any or all of theſe characters, they may neither forget nor be aſhamed to be Chriſtians.

are univerſally approved, and which impiety itſelf cannot ſpeak againſt; ſuch as truth and integrity in ſpeech, honeſty in dealing, humanity and compaſſion to perſons in diſtreſs. But there are other particulars, in which the worldly virtue and the Chriſtian virtue ſeem to be different things. Of theſe I ſhall ſelect one, as an example, viz. Spirit, dignity, or greatneſs of mind. This ſeems to be entirely of the worldly caſt; it holds a very high place in the eſteem of all worldly men; the boldeſt pretenſions are often made to it, by thoſe who treat religion with neglect, and religious perſons with diſdain or defiance. It is alſo a virtue of a very dazzling appearance; ready to captivate the mind, and particularly, to make a deep impreſſion on young perſons, when they firſt enter into life. At the ſame time, the goſpel ſeems to ſtand directly oppoſed to it. The humility of the creature, the abaſement and contrition of the ſinner, the dependence and ſelf-denial of the believer, and above all, the ſhame and reproach of the croſs itſelf, ſeem to conſpire in obliging us to renounce it.

What ſhall we ſay then, my brethren? Shall we ſay that magnanimity is no virtue at all, and that no ſuch excellence belongs to human nature? Or ſhall we admit that there is beauty and excellence in it—confeſſing at the ſame time, that it does not belong to religion, and only ſay, that though we want this, we have many other and better qualities in its place? To this I can never agree; for

for every real excellence is consistent with every other; nay, every real excellence is adorned and illustrated by every other. Vices may be inconsistent with each other, but virtues never can. And, therefore, as magnanimity is an amiable and noble quality, one of the greatest ornaments of our nature, so I affirm that it belongs only to true and undefiled religion, and that every appearance of the one, without the other, is not only defective, but false.

The holy scriptures, it is true, do chiefly insist upon what is proper to humble our pride, and to bring us to a just apprehension of our character and state. This was wise and just, because of that corruption and misery into which we are fallen; the contrary would have been unjust. It is evidently more necessary, in the present state of human nature, to restrain pride, than to kindle ambition. But as the scripture points out our original dignity, and the true glory of our nature, so every true penitent is there taught to aspire after the noblest character, and to entertain the most exalted hopes. In the passage which I have chosen as the subject of my discourse, you see the Apostle exhorts the Thessalonians to walk suitably to the dignity of their character, and the importance of their privileges, which is a short but just description of true and genuine greatness of mind.

My single purpose, from these words, at this time, is to explain and recommend magnanimity

as a Chriſtian virtue; and I wiſh to do it in ſuch a manner, as neither to weaken its luſtre, nor admit any degree of that corrupt mixture, by which it is often counterfeited and greatly debaſed. Some infidels have in terms affirmed, that Chriſtianity has baniſhed magnanimity, and by its precepts of meekneſs, humility, and paſſive ſubmiſſion to injury, has deſtroyed that nobleneſs of ſentiment, which rendered the ancients ſo illuſtrious, and gives ſo much majeſty and dignity to the hiſtories of Greece and Rome. In oppoſition to this, I hope to be able to ſhew that real greatneſs is inſeparable from ſincere piety, and that any defect in the one, muſt neceſſarily be a diſcernable blemiſh in the other. With this view, I will, firſt, give you the principles of magnanimity in general, as a natural quality; ſecondly, I will ſhew what is neceſſary to give it real value, as a moral virtue; and, thirdly, ſhew that it ſhines with the moſt perfect brightneſs as a Chriſtian grace; after, will improve the ſubject, by a practical application of what may be ſaid for your inſtruction and direction.

Firſt, then, let me ſtate the principles of magnanimity, in general, as a natural quality. I think it muſt be admitted, that as there is a real difference between bodies as to ſize and bulk, as well as other ſenſible qualities, ſo there is a real character of greatneſs, or meanneſs, applicable to the mind, diſtinct from its other qualities or powers. It is, however, I apprehend, a ſimple impreſſion,

impreſſion, which cannot be explained or further analized, but may eaſily be felt, and is beſt illuſtrated by its effects. Theſe may be ſummed up in the following particulars: to magnanimity it belongeth to attempt, 1. Great and difficult things; 2. To aſpire after great and valuable poſſeſſions; 3. To encounter dangers with reſolution; 4. To ſtruggle againſt difficulties with perſeverance; and, 5. To bear ſufferings with fortitude and patience.

1. It belongs to magnanimity to attempt great and difficult things. Thoſe who, from a love of ſloth and eaſe, neglect the exerciſe or improvement of their powers; and thoſe who apply them with ever ſo great aſſiduity and attention, to things mean or of ſmall conſequence, are plainly deſtitute of this quality. We perceive a meanneſs and want of ſpirit in this reſpect, when particular perſons fall below their rank in life, or when, as is too frequently the caſe in any rank, they fall below human nature itſelf. When a prince, or other perſon of the firſt order and importance in human life, buſies himſelf in nothing but the moſt trifling amuſements, or arts of little value, we call it mean; and when any man, endowed with rational powers, loſes them through neglect, or deſtroys them by the moſt grovelling ſenſuality, we ſay he is acting below himſelf. The contrary of this, therefore, or the vigorous exertion of all our powers, and particularly, the applica-

tion of them to things of moment and difficulty, is real magnanimity.

2. It belongs to magnanimity to aſpire after great and valuable poſſeſſions. It is more difficult properly to illuſtrate this as a branch of magnanimity, becauſe of its frequent perverſion, which will be afterwards explained. It ſeems, however, to be neceſſarily included in the general character. A great mind has great capacities of enjoyment as well as action. And as there is a difference between the bleſſings in our view, both in point of dignity and extent, ſuch a man will not be eaſily ſatisfied, or put up with what is either mean or ſcanty, while he can acquire and poſſeſs a better and more extenſive portion. The large and increaſing deſires of the human mind, have often been made an argument for the dignity of our nature, and our having been made for ſomething that is great and excellent.

3. It belongs to magnanimity to encounter dangers with reſolution. This is inſeparable from, and conſtitutes a leading part of the character. Even the moſt excellent and valuable ſervices to mankind, if they are attended with no difficulty at all, or meet with no oppoſition, though they retain the character of utility, yet, for want of this circumſtance, they loſe that of greatneſs. Courage is always conſidered as a great quality; it has had the admiration, or rather adoration, of mankind in every age. Many, when they ſpeak of magnanimity, mean nothing elſe but courage, and when

when they speak of meanness, have little other idea but that of timidity. Neither is there, I think, any human weakness, that is more the object of contempt and disdain, than cowardice, which, when applied to life in general, is commonly called pusillanimity.

4. It belongs to greatness, to struggle against difficulties with steadiness and perseverance. Perseverance is nothing else but continued and inflexible courage. We see some persons, who shew the greatest activity and boldness for a season, but time and opposition weaken their force, and seem, if I may speak so, to exhaust their courage, as if they wasted the power by the exertion. Perseverance, therefore, is necessary to greatness. Few things are more contrary to this character, than fickleness and unsteadiness. We commonly join together, the characters of weak and changeable.

5. In the last place, it belongs to greatness to bear sufferings with fortitude and patience. This is a kindred quality to the former, and is necessary to complete the character of magnanimity. Such is the state of human things, that suffering is in one way or another, wholly unavoidable. It often happens, that difficulties cannot be removed, or enemies cannot be conquered; and then it is the last effort of greatness of mind, to bear the weight of the one or the cruelty of the other, with firmness and patience. This virtue has always been of the greatest reputation. It is a well known saying, of a heathen philosopher, that a great

great man, ſuffering with invincible patience, under a weight of misfortunes, is a ſight, which even the gods muſt behold with admiration.

Having thus pointed out the principles, or rather enumerated the chief effects of magnanimity, as a natural quality; let us now, in the ſecond place, conſider what is neceſſary to give it real value, as a moral virtue. This is of the utmoſt importance, and muſt appear ſo, to all who will conſider the ſubject with attention. That I may ſet the matter in as clear a light as poſſible, obſerve, that to render magnanimity a valuable quality, it muſt further have the following characters.

1. The object of our deſires muſt be juſt as well as great. Some of the nobleſt powers of the human mind, have often been exerted in invading the rights, inſtead of promoting the intereſt and happineſs of mankind. As the hiſtory of the world, is little elſe than the hiſtory of human guilt; ſo, many of the moſt illuſtrious names, tranſmitted down to us, have been thoſe of the moſt active and ſucceſsful deſtroyers of their fellow creatures. There may be, and there have been in ſuch perſons, many or moſt of the ingredients of natural greatneſs of mind, but theſe have only ſerved to make the characters, in the eye of reaſon, more hideous and deteſtable.

2. Our deſires ought to be governed by wiſdom and prudence, as well as juſtice. If any perſon either forms difficult projects, or aſpires after

after great poſſeſſions, and in proſecution of his purpoſes, exerts ever ſo much courage, fortitude and patience: yet, if theſe deſigns are leſs uſeful, or theſe poſſeſſions leſs valuable, than others to which he might have applied the ſame talents, it cannot deſerve the name of true magnanimity. If any perſon, for example, forms a reſolution of exerting his ſkill, in ſuch feats or performances as have nothing or very little valuable in them, but that they are difficult and uncommon, I think no man will pretend that he has any title to the character of greatneſs of mind, otherwiſe a rope-dancer might be a hero. Or, if any perſon ſhould ſpend a whole life, in the moſt unwearied application to the ſingle purpoſe of accumulating wealth, however vaſt his deſire, or however aſtoniſhing his ſucceſs, his merit would be very ſmall. Nay, we muſt be ſenſible that he has loſt many opportunities of doing ſignal ſervice to mankind, and of acquiring more valuable and durable enjoyments, while in purſuit of this, which, after all, will diſappoint his hopes.

3. The principle of action muſt be honourable, as well as the atchievements illuſtrious. If a perſon does things ever ſo extraordinary in their nature, overcomes the greateſt difficulties, or braves the moſt formidable dangers, merely to make his name famous, we muſt at once perceive how much it detracts even from his name itſelf. This is not the language of religion only, it is the language of reaſon, and the dictate of the human heart.

heart. An inſatiable thirſt of praiſe, is ſo far from being amiable, that it is hateful or contemptible. I am ſenſible that a thirſt of fame, is not only apparent in, but ſeems to have been confeſſed by many of the moſt diſtinguiſhed heroes of antiquity; but as it certainly does abate, in a good degree, the luſtre of their great actions, ſo the indulgence that is given them, upon this head, is wholly owing to the diſadvantages they lay under, in a ſtate of Heatheniſm, and their ignorance of a better and nobler principle. 'Nothing,' ſays an eminent author, 'can be great, 'the contempt of which is great;' and, therefore, if a contempt of riches, a neglect of fame, and a readineſs to ſacrifice both to duty and uſefulneſs, is one of the moſt glorious characters we can conceive, it is plain, that not the deeds, but the principle is the evidence, and not the head nor the hands of man, but the heart is the ſeat of genuine greatneſs.

4. In the laſt place, in order to real greatneſs, every attempt muſt be poſſible and rational, perhaps probable. Nothing is more common than to find perſons, under the pretence of great and illuſtrious deſigns, proſecuting what is not of any value when obtained, and at the ſame time ſcarcely poſſible, and no way probable to be obtained at all. This is declining altogether from the line of greatneſs, and going into the path of extravagance. Again, ſhould any man undertake what he was altogether unable to perform, however excellent

cellent the deſign were in itſelf, we would not dignify it even with the name of ambition; he would acquire and deſerve the character, not of greatneſs, but of folly or madneſs.

On the whole, it is plain that theſe moral principles, muſt enter into the compoſition of true greatneſs, and that, when they are wanting, the natural characters mentioned before, degenerate into vice, and aſſume the names of pride, ambition, temerity, ferocity and obſtinacy.

This leads me, in the third place, to ſhew, not only that there is nothing in real religion, contrary to magnanimity, but that there, and there only, it appears in its beauty and perfection. Let me briefly run over, and apply to religion, the above-mentioned ingredients of magnanimity.

1. It is to attempt great and difficult things. Religion calls us to the greateſt and moſt noble attempts, whether in a private or public view. In a private view, it calls us to reſiſt and ſubdue every corrupt and ſinful paſſion, however ſtrongly the indulgence is ſolicited by the tempting object, or recommended by the artful ſeducer. The importance and difficulty of this ſtruggle, appears not only from the holy ſcriptures, but from the experience and teſtimony of mankind in every age. What cautions are given by Solomon upon this ſubject? 'He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his 'ſpirit, than he that taketh a city.' The wiſeſt Heathens have inculcated the neceſſity of ſelf-

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government, and the danger of ſurrounding temptation, by many inſtructive images. But why ſhould I extend this part of the ſubject? How few are ſucceſsful in this attempt? This alone is a ſufficient proof, that it is great and difficult, and every perſon exerciſed to godlineſs, will be abundantly ſenſible of it, from the ſtate of his own heart.

In a public view, every good man is called to live and act for the glory of God, and the good of others. Here he has as extenſive a ſcene of activity, as he can poſſibly deſire. He is not indeed permitted to glory or to build an altar to his own vanity, but he is both permitted and obliged to exert his talents, to improve his time, to employ his ſubſtance, and to hazard his life in his Maker's ſervice, or his country's cauſe. Nor am I able to conceive any character more truly great than that of one, whatever be his ſtation or profeſſion, who is devoted to the public good under the immediate order of Providence. He does not ſeek the bubble reputation in the deadly breach, but he complains of no difficulty, and refuſes no ſervice, if he thinks he carries the commiſſion of the King of kings.

2. The truly pious man aſpires after the greateſt and moſt valuable poſſeſſions. He deſpiſes, indeed, the uncertain and the unſatisfying enjoyments of time. His deſires after preſent enjoyments, are ſubjected to the will of God. He has given them up without reſerve, yet his heavenly Father

Father knoweth that he hath need of these things, and therefore he both asks and hopes to receive what is suitable and necessary, and believes that a little that a just man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked. But the glorious object of the christian's ambition, is the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The honourable relation he stands in to God as his adopted child in Christ Jesus, inclines and authorises him to hope for this purchased possession, and enables him to look down with becoming indifference on all the glory of this transitory world. Let the rich man glory in his riches, and the wise man glory in his wisdom; he only glories in this, that he knoweth the Lord, and shall be with him for ever.

3. True piety encounters the greatest dangers with resolution. The fear of God is the only effectual mean to deliver us from the fear of man. Experience has abundantly shewn, that the servants of Christ have adhered to his cause, and made profession of his name, in opposition to all the terrors which infernal policy could present to them, and all the sufferings, with which the most savage inhumanity could afflict them. But as this belongs to the case of persecution for conscience sake, which, by the peculiar kindness of Providence, is exceedingly rare among us, it is proper to observe, that every christian has frequent opportunities of manifesting a holy resolution in encountering the reproach and derision

of worldly men, for adhering to his duty. And when we conſider how hard it is to bear reproach and ſcorn, called, in ſcripture, 'the trial of 'cruel mockings', there will appear to be no ſmall meaſure of dignity and heroiſm in him, who can calmly ſubmit to it from every quarter, rather than depart from his duty. There are not a few who are apt to boaſt of their ſpirit and reſolution, who are yet unable to bear reproach, and meanly make the ſentiments of others, and the caprice of faction, the rule of duty, in place of the clear dictates of conſcience, and the word of God. How contemptible is this, compared to the conduct of that man, who ſeeks no fame, but by honeſt means, and fears no reproach for honeſt actions, but contents himſelf with a ſilent and believing regard to him who ſeeth in ſecret, and who ſhall at laſt bring every work into judgment.

4. True piety perſeveres with conſtancy in oppoſition to continued trial. This is indeed what diſtinguiſhes the Chriſtian warfare from that of every other. It continues through life, and the laſt enemy to be overcome is death. In all the conflicts between men on earth, the iſſue may be ſpeedily expected, and the reward immediately beſtowed; but in religion, it is only he who ſhall endure to the end that ſhall be ſaved. This adds greatly to the difficulty, and ſeems to ſhew, not only the excellence and beauty, but the real dignity

dignity and magnanimity of the christian character.

5. In the last place, true piety endures suffering with patience and fortitude. If we reflect upon the number of suffering martyrs, whose testimonies are upon record, we shall see with what calmness and composure, with what undaunted firmness, and sometimes with what exultation and triumph they have gone to a scaffold, or been tied to a stake. Can any person, think you, who hath gone to the field of battle, in quest of glory, or who hath braved the danger of the seas, in quest of wealth or power, be once compared with those who have chearfully given up their precious life, or submitted their bodies to the torture, to keep their consciences undefiled? But my brethren, christian patience is much more frequently tried in another manner. The believer has made an unreserved surrender of himself and his all, to the disposal of providence: His faithfulness to this promise, is brought almost every day to the trial. For the christian then to suffer reproach, without rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, to be submissive under the loss of substance, and say with Job, 'Naked came 'I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I 'return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord 'hath taken away; blessed be the name of the 'Lord.'—To yield up relations, and to say with David, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not re-'turn to me.' To look forward to approaching

death, and ſay with the Apoſtle Paul, 'I am now 'ready to be offered, and the time of my depar-'ture is at hand.' This is magnanimity indeed; this is the moſt ſolid glory to which any child of Adam can poſſibly attain. I proceed, in the laſt place, to make ſome practical improvement of what hath been ſaid.

1. You may learn, from what has been ſaid that whenever honour differs from conſcience, it is a treacherous guide; wherever ſpirit and dignity of mind, as a worldly virtue, differs from true religion, and even from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, it is falſe and ſpurious. The goſpel, it is true, will not ſuffer men to ſeek revenge, or to delight in it. It will humble them in the ſight of God, and make them ſelf-denied in the preſence of men, yet it will conſtrain them not to refuſe any duty to the one, or any uſeful ſervice to the other. It will not ſuffer them to be ambitious of higher places of honour and truſt, but it will make them active and zealous in the duties of that place, in which they already are. It will not ſuffer them to reſent injuries and gratify revenge, but it will make them withſtand a king upon his throne, if he preſume to interfere in the matters of their God. What is there here that is not noble?

After all, the teſtimony in favour of true piety, is univerſal, if carefully attended to. Every one muſt acknowledge, that oſtentation, and love of praiſe and whatever is contrary to the ſelf-denial of the

the goſpel, tarniſhes the beauty of the greateſt actions. Courage and modeſty, merit and humility, majeſty and condeſcenſion, appear with tenfold glory, when they are united; it is impoſſible to ſeparate them; to divide, is to deſtroy them. They are like light and ſhade in a picture, which are neceſſary to each other, and which, by their union, conſtitute the beauty and augment the luſtre of the piece. So true is this, that the higheſt poliſh that any perſon can receive in commerce with the world, is to have an apparent diſpoſition to prefer the intereſt of others to his own, to guard againſt every degree of offence, and to be always ready to oblige. I have often been pleaſed with that obſervation of a foreigner of high rank†, that worldly politeneſs is only an imperfect imitation of Chriſtian charity, it is nothing elſe but a ſtudied appearance of that deference to the judgment and attention to the intereſt of others, which a true Chriſtian hath as the rule of his duty, and the diſpoſition of his heart.

2. Suffer me to obſerve, that as Chriſtian magnanimity is more excellent than that of the world, it is alſo more practicable, and, in fact, more univerſal. Worldly magnanimity is what always requires ſuch talents, as do not fall to the lot of many, and ſuch opportunities for its exerciſe, as ſeldom occur. The road to heroiſm is not open to every man. But that magnanimity, which is the fruit of true religion, being in-

† The Prince of Conti.

deed the product of divine grace, is a virtue of the heart, and may be attained by perſons of mean talents and narrow poſſeſſions, and in the very loweſt ſtations of human life. In fact, there have been, and are daily examples of it in every rank. We ſee the heroic fortitude of the martyrs, as manifeſt in thoſe of early years, and the weakeſt ſex, as in any other; and whoever will viſit the ſolitary walks of life, may find, in the loweſt ſtations, humility, thankfulneſs, patience under affliction, and ſubmiſſion to providence, ſuch as would do honour to the moſt approved virtue, and the moſt enlightened mind. To deſpiſe riches, and reſtrain the motions of envy and impatience, in a needy ſtate, is perhaps as truly noble as to improve them wiſely in a higher. Thus, the honour which is chiefly deſirable, is equally open to the rich and to the poor, to the learned and to the unlearned, to the wiſe and to the unwiſe, as it cometh from God, who is no reſpecter of perſons. One of the beſt and happieſt effects of ſerious reflection is, to bring us, in a great meaſure, all upon a level, as indeed, in one moſt important reſpect—the magiſtrate with his robes, the ſcholar with his learning, and the day-labourer, that ſtands unnoticed, are all upon the ſame footing—for we muſt all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt.

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ADDRESS

TO THE

Students of the Senior Claſs.

On the Lord's Day preceding Commencement.

September 23. 1775.

Gentlemen,

As you have now finiſhed the uſual courſe of ſtudy in this place, and are to enter upon public life in a variety of ways, as each ſhall be determined by inclination or other circumſtances, I willingly embrace the opportunity of addreſſing an exhortation to you, at this important and intereſting period of your lives. I do

do not mean to ſay much, if any thing, that you have never heard before; but to lay hold of your preſent ſituation, with ſome hope, that what may be ſaid now, will remain upon your memory, and have an influence upon your future conduct. That I may ſpeak with the greater clearneſs and preciſion, I will divide what I have to ſay, into three branches. 1. Your duty to God, and the intereſt of your ſouls. 2. The proſecution of your ſtudies, or the improvement of your talents, as members of ſociety. 3. Prudence in your commerce with the world in general, your outward proviſion and other circumſtances in life.

As to the firſt of theſe, it is to all men of the greateſt moment. Some of you, I know, and more, I hope, are intended for the ſervice of Chriſt in the miniſtry. To this we have the univerſal ſuffrage, that true religion is abſolutely neceſſary, with which I heartily agree. But I wiſh thoſe who are deſtined for other employments, may not ſometimes make a compariſon here unjuſt in itſelf, and dangerous, perhaps even ruinous to their own ſouls. Becauſe true religion is neceſſary to a miniſter, and they are conſcious to themſelves, or at leaſt ſuſpect that they are without religion; inſtead of laying to heart the things that belong to their peace, they only determine that they will follow ſome other calling. But alas, though the difference to the public is very great, the difference to the perſons themſelves, ſeems

ſeems to me but very ſmall. A clergyman without religion, to be ſure is a dreadful character, and, when viſible, a deteſtable one; but truly one would think, at the cloſe of life, it will be but little comfort to a man, that he muſt go to the place of torment, not as a miniſter, but as a lawyer, phyſician, ſoldier, or merchant. Therefore ſuffer me to ſay to you, and to all who now hear me, that the care of your ſouls is the 'one 'thing needful.' All mankind, of every rank, denomination and profeſſion, are ſinners by nature. The miniſters of the New Teſtament have received a commiſſion to preach the goſpel to every creature: 'He that believeth ſhall be ſav-'ed, and he that believeth not ſhall be damned.'

While I ſay this, I beg of you to conſider that the advantages which you have enjoyed, will be an aggravation of your guilt, if they are unimproved. There is an equity as well as wiſdom often to be obſerved in the providence of God. Unleſs reaſons of ſovereignty, that is, reaſons unknown to us, prevent it, judgment will be inflicted, when a perſon or people is ripe for the ſtroke. Therefore, as ſome plants and ſeeds, both from their own nature and from the ſoil and ſituation in which they are placed, ripen ſooner than others, ſo ſome perſons, by the early pains taken upon them, and the privileges they have enjoyed, fill up the meaſure of their iniquities ſooner than others, and are more ſpeedily overtaken with deſerved vengeance.

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There are many common ſayings that are the effects of error and prejudice; for example, that which you will be told by many, that the children of good men are as bad as any. If this is intended to inſinuate that a regular and pious education affords no ground to hope for good behaviour in after life, it is at once contrary to reaſon and experience. But if we ſhould ſay that when young perſons piouſly educated, burſt reſtraining bonds aſunder, and are ſeduced into vicious courſes, they commonly run faſter and farther than others, it is a certain fact, which may be eaſily accounted for, and affords an important inſtruction to all.

After intreating you to lay religion to heart, I muſt beſeech you to guard againſt being too eaſily ſatisfied in a matter of infinite moment. Do not think it enough to be prudent, cautious, or decent in your conduct, or to attain a character formed upon worldly principles, and governed by worldly motives. I am not againſt (as you all know) introducing every argument againſt ſin, and ſhewing you that looſe practices are ruinous to name, body, and eſtate. Neither is it wrong that you ſhould fortify every pious reſolution by the addition of theſe motives. But alas! the evil lies deeper. 'Except a man be born again, he 'cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' True religion muſt ariſe from a clear and deep conviction of your loſt ſtate by nature and practice,

and

and an unfeigned reliance on the pardoning mercy and ſanctifying grace of God.

Suffer me, upon this ſubject, earneſtly to recommend to all that fear God, to apply themſelves from their earlieſt youth, to the exerciſes of piety, a life of prayer and communion with God. This is the ſource from which a real Chriſtian muſt derive the ſecret comfort of his heart, and which alone will give beauty, conſiſtency, and uniformity to an exemplary life. The reaſon why I have mentioned it on this occaſion is, that youth, when the ſpirits are lively and the affections vigorous and ſtrong, is the ſeaſon when this habit muſt be formed. There are advantages and diſadvantages attending every ſtage of life. An aged Chriſtian will naturally grow in prudence, vigilance, uſefulneſs, attention to the courſe of providence, and ſubjection to the divine will; but will ſeldom attain to greater fervour of affection and life in divine worſhip, than he had been accuſtomed to from his early years. On the contrary, he will generally ſee it neceſſary inſtead of truſting to occaſional impulſes to guard and ſtrengthen the habit by order and form.

Be companions of them that fear God. Eſteem them always moſt highly, and ſhun, as a contagious peſtilence, the ſociety not only of looſe perſons, but of thoſe eſpecially whom you perceive to be infected with the principles of infidelity, or enemies to the power of religion. Many of

of these are much more dangerous to pious persons than open profligates. As for these last, decency is against them, the world itself condemns them, reason despises them, and prudence shuns them. He must have a very mean taste indeed who is capable of finding pleasure in disorder and riot. If I had no higher pleasure on earth than in eating and drinking, I would not chuse to eat and drink with the drunken. Order, neatness, elegance, and even moderation itself are necessary to exalt and refine the pleasures of a sensual life. Therefore I will not allow myself to suppose, that I shall afterwards hear of any of you roaring and swearing in taverns, or wasting your bodies and estates, by lewdness and debauchery, or that you take pleasure in those who do so. But be especially careful to avoid those who are enemies to vital piety, who do not pretend to speak directly against religion, but give every vile name they can think of, to all who seem to be in earnest on that subject, and vilify the exercises of religion under the names of whining, cant, grimace, and hypocrisy. These are often unhappily successful in making some uncautious persons ashamed of their Redeemer's name, his truths, his laws, his people, and his cross.

I need hardly observe, that this is not to be understood as recommending pharisaical pride and superciliousness, far less a rash and presumptuous judging of the state of others. It is not only

only lawful, but our duty, to have a free communication with our fellow citizens, for the purposes of social life: It is not only lawful but our duty to be courteous and to give every proper evidence of respect and attention to others, according to their rank and place in society. What I mean to caution you against is, an unnecessary, voluntary intercourse, such as has inclination for its motive and pleasure for its object. With respect to this, we need not hesitate to say with the inspired prophet, 'He that walketh with 'wise men shall be wise, but a companion of 'fools shall be destroyed.'

2. I come now to speak a little upon the prosecution of your studies and the improvement of your talents. Your education in a seminary of learning, is only intended to give you the elements and first principles of science, which should whet your appetite for more, and which will enable you to proceed with an assured hope of success. It hath been generally a favourite point with me, to recommend the union of piety and literature, and to guard young persons against the opposite extremes. We see sometimes the pride of unsanctified knowledge do great injury to religion; and on the other hand, we find some persons of real piety despising human learning, and disgracing the most glorious truths by a meanness and indecency hardly sufferable in their manner of handling them. On this account, industry and application to study is of the

utmost importance to those who are intended for the office of the ministry.

But I have it further in view, to recommend to you all, without exception, a life of diligence and application. Avoid sloth as a dangerous enemy; fear it, hate it, and despise it. It is a common saying, that men do not know their own weakness; but it is as true, and a truth more important, that they do not know their own strength. I desire that you will receive the following information from me, which I dare say, every person of judgment and experience will confirm, that multitudes of moderate capacity have been useful in their generation, respected by the public, and successful in life; while those of superior talents from nature, by mere slothfulness and idle habits, or self-indulgence, have lived useless and died contemptible. There is also a disposition in young people, which you know I have often set myself to oppose, to think that loose irregular sallies, and sometimes even vicious liberties are a sign of spirit and capacity. The very contrary is the truth. It requires no genius at all to do mischief. Persons of the greatest ability have generally been lovers of order. Neither is there any instance to be found of a man's arriving at great reputation or usefulness, be his capacity what it might, without industry and application.

Suffer me here, in a particular manner, to recommend to you a firmness of mind and steady per-

perſeverance as of the utmoſt moment to your progreſs and ſucceſs. Whatever a man's talents from nature may be, if he apply himſelf to what is not altogether unſuitable to them, and hold on with ſteadineſs and uniformity, he will be uſeful and happy; but if he be looſe and volatile, impatient of the ſlowneſs of things in their uſual courſe, and ſhifting from project to project, he will probably neither be the one nor the other.

I am ſomewhat at a loſs what to ſay as to character and reputation, yet it is ſo important a point, that it muſt not be omitted. True religion ſhould furniſh you with a higher and nobler principle to govern your conduct than the deſire of applauſe from men. Yet in ſubordination to what ought to be the great purpoſe of life, the approbation of the ſupreme Judge, there is a juſt and laudable ambition to do what is praiſe-worthy among men. This ought not to be extinguiſhed in the minds of youth; being a powerful ſpur and incitement to virtuous or illuſtrious actions. A truly good man will ſeek no praiſe but by honeſt means, and will be ſuperior even to diſgrace itſelf, if brought upon him by adherence to his duty. Yet he will alſo be tender and careful not to give juſt cauſe to any to impeach his conduct. If I might be permitted to direct your views upon this ſubject, I would ſay, conſider that your character is already beginning to form. Every ſtep you take further in life, will both aſcertain and ſpread it. You ought alſo to

be informed, that notwithstanding all the hackneyed complaints of the partiality and censoriousness of the world, a man's real character, in point of ability, is never mistaken, and but seldom in point of morals. That there are many malicious and censorious persons I agree, but lies are not half so durable as truth. There is an impartiality in a diffusive public, which will shew itself where means of information are afforded to it. Therefore reverence the judgment of mankind without idolizing it. Be as cautious as possible to do nothing that deserves censure, and as little concerned as possible what reproaches may fall upon you undeserved. It is not a contradiction, but perfectly consistent to say, a man should be tender and even jealous of his character, and yet not greedy of praise. There is an amiableness and dignity in the first, but a meanness and littleness in the last.

Another advice, near a kin to the last, is; do as much as you can to deserve praise, and yet avoid as much as possible the hearing of it. This is but another view of the same subject; and that it may be the more useful, and my intention in it the more manifest, I will extend it both to praise and dispraise. When you come into public life, and become the objects of general attention, not only guard against fishing for applause, and being inquisitive after what people think or say of you, but avoid knowing it as much as you decently can. My reason for this is, that whether

you

you will or not you will hear as much of the slander of your enemies as you will bear with patience, and as much of the flattery of your friends, or interested persons, as you will bear with humility. Therefore prepare yourself for both, but seek for neither. Several eminent authors, as you doubtless know, have given it as an advice to young clergymen, and other public speakers, to get a friend who is a good judge, and intreat him to make remarks upon their composition, carriage, delivery, &c. with fidelity. I have nothing to say against the goodness of the advice in itself, but at the same time, I have no great conviction of the necessity or even the utility of it. It is very seldom that advice is asked in this manner, but with a view to obtain a compliment, and still seldomer that it is given with sufficient freedom and impartiality. If any man has humility and self-denial enough to wish to know his own faults, there will be little difficulty in discovering them. Or if we could suppose there were difficulty to himself, his enemies, or rivals, or talkative people, though they be neither the one nor the other, will supply the defect. Perhaps you will think, that in the strictures of malice and envy, there is generally an acrimony that has no great tendency to reform; like a rusty knife, which makes a very painful wound, though not very deep. I agree to this fully, and yet affirm, that there is so much the more virtue, so much the more wisdom, and

perhaps I may add, so much the more pleasure in making this use of them.

I conclude this part of my subject, with advising you to maintain a friendship with one another, and to carry the intimacies of early life, through the whole of it. To this I add, that you ought to desire and cultivate the correspondence of men of piety and learning. Man made for society, derives his chief advantages of every kind, from the united efforts of many conspiring to the same end. As to piety, nothing is more essential to it, than social communication. It properly consists in the supreme love of God, and fervent charity to all men. The Christian also hath need of the assistance of others in his passage through this world, where he has so much opposition to encounter. Those who deserve this character, are said to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth. Therefore they ought to keep together, lest they lose their way. They comfort each other in distress, they assist each other in doubts and difficulty, they embolden each other by their example, and they assist each other by their prayers.

This is no less the case in respect to literature. It has been observed, that great and eminent men have generally, in every nation, appeared in clusters. The reason of this probably is, that their society and mutual intercourse greatly adds to their improvement, and gives force and vigour to the talents which they may severally possess.

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Nothing is so powerful an incitement to diligence or so kindles the best sort of ambition, as the friendship, advice, and assistance of men of learning and worth. The approbation of one such, is of more value to a noble mind, than peals of applause from an undiscerning multitude. Besides, the assistance which men of letters give to each other, is really necessary in the execution of particular works of great compass and utility. If it is by the labours of preceding ages, that it is now possible in one life to attain to such a degree of knowledge as we have sometimes seen, so it is by the concurrence of many friends lending their assistance, that one man has been sometimes able to present to the public, a system of science, which without that aid, he alone would have in vain attempted to bring to perfection. There is no circumstance which throws this new country so far back in point of science, as the want of public libraries, where thorough researches might be made, and the small number of learned men to assist in making researches practicable, easy or complete.

3. The last head on which I promised to give you my advice, was prudence in your communication with the world in general, your outward provision and other circumstances that conduce to the happiness and comfort of life. On this subject, I begin with what I have often recommended to you, frugality in the management of your affairs, order and exactness in your dress, furniture

furniture, books, and keeping of accounts. Nothing could be further from my mind than to recommend the temper or conduct of avaricious men, whose sordid souls have no higher ambition, and indeed, hardly any other desire, than that of getting pelf. This is not only unbecoming a gentleman and scholar, but, in my opinion, wholly inconsistent with the character. I never knew an instance of a person in whom this disposition took place in early life, that could apply to study, or that became eminent in any thing that was good. The opposite vice is the common fault of youth, and it is against this I would caution you. The frugality I would recommend, is that of an independant mind, that fears and scorns subjection to others, and remembers the just saying of Solomon, that 'the borrower is servant 'to the lender.' That frugality which arises from order and œconomy, is not only consistent with, but it is the parent of liberality of sentiment and generosity of conduct. It is indeed the source of beneficence, for no man can bestow out of an empty purse. On the other hand, covetousness and profusion, are by no means repugnant to each other, and indeed they are more frequently joined than many apprehend. The stricture of Sallust on the character of Catiline, 'alieni appetens, sui profusus,' has been often cited, and may generally be applied to loose and profligate livers. I hope therefore you will learn betimes to distinguish between the virtue and the

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vice, and to adhere to the one as much as you deride the other.

I will make an observation here, which may be applied not only to the distinction of character in this instance, but in almost every other that has been or shall be mentioned. It will be much your interest, if you learn betimes to make not a hasty but a deliberate and candid judgment, when you infer character from appearances. The habits of life which men contract, give a bias to their opinions and even a tincture to their conversation and phraseology. Persons inclined to levity and dissipation, will often ascribe to covetousness, what arises from very different causes. I have known, even in youth, a person declining to engage in a party of pleasure, accused by his companions as mean and sneaking, and afraid of his purse, when, in reality, it was not that he loved money more, but pleasure less. It may sometimes happen, that a person of principle, will see it proper to decline meetings of festivity, though not directly sinful, as an unnecessary waste of time, or from some other circumstance to him dangerous and ensnaring. I have also seen persons more advanced in years, who from a habit, perhaps a necessary habit, of strict temperance, and retired manner of life, were very sparing of personal expence, and even not much disposed to social intercourse, and therefore called close or covetous; and yet when applied to, for pious or charitable purposes, would be much more liberal

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than others of an oppoſite turn of mind. Obſervations perfectly ſimilar might be made upon the oppoſite character of liberality. It is not every kind openneſs of heart that indicates profuſion. We are told by Solomon, that 'the liberal ſoul 'ſhall be made fat,' and by the prophet Iſaiah, that 'the liberal deſireth liberal things, and by 'liberal things he ſhall be eſtabliſhed.' From theſe contraſted remarks, I infer, that as it is ſeldom neceſſary to judge peremptorily of others, ſo forbearance and the moſt charitable allowance, is both our duty and intereſt.

In the next place, I recommend to you, humility of heart and meekneſs of carriage. I conſider in this place, the grace of humility as a virtue eſpecially ſerviceable to your earthly comfort. I conſider and mean to treat it as a maxim of worldly prudence. The ſcripture ſeems to point it out as peculiarly neceſſary for this purpoſe, and to annex the promiſe of earthly happineſs to the practice of it. 'Bleſſed are the meek,' ſays our Saviour, 'for they ſhall inherit the earth.' I would underſtand him as ſaying, every good man ſhall inherit the kingdom of heaven, but thoſe who excel in meekneſs, ſhall of all others have comfort on earth. In many different views, we may ſee the propriety of this connection. Nothing is more offenſive to others, than a proud aſſuming manner. It not only magnifies every fault, but vitiates even good conduct. It is not only odious to virtuous perſons, but it is equally, if not

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more ſo, to thoſe who are without principle. Some vices recommend a man to the vicious in the ſame line, as one drunkard is pleaſed with the ſight of another; but nothing is ſo hateful to a proud man, as another of the ſame character, nor is offence ſooner given or taken than between thoſe, who, in this reſpect, perfectly reſemble one another. This vice is not only odious to perſons of underſtanding and reflection, but to the moſt ignorant, being as eaſily perceived as it is univerſally hated.

The moral virtue of meekneſs, and condeſcenſion, is the beſt ground-work even of worldly politeneſs, and prepares a man to receive that poliſh, which makes his behaviour generally agreable, and fits him for intercourſe with perſons in the higher ranks of life. The ſame virtue, by the compoſure and ſelf-command that accompanies it, enables a man to manage his affairs to advantage, in whatever calling he may be engaged, or in whatever ſtation he may be placed. A good ſhopkeeper is commonly remarkable for this quality. People love to go where they meet with good words and gentle treatment; whereas the peeviſh and petulant may be ſaid, to have a repelling quality about them that will not ſuffer any body to approach them.

To complete the whole, meekneſs of ſpirit is as uſeful to a man's ſelf as meekneſs of carriage is acceptable to others. The meek ſuffer much leſs from the unavoidable evils of life, than thoſe

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of a contrary diſpoſition. Many croſs accidents of the leſs important kind, are in a manner annihilated when they are born with calmneſs. The injury they do us, is not owing half ſo much to their weight or ſeverity, as to the irritability of our own minds. It is evident that the ſame diſpoſition muſt greatly alleviate calamities of a heavier kind; and from analogy you may perceive, that as it mitigates the ſorrows, it multiplies and adds to the ſweetneſs of the comforts of life. A moderate portion gives greater ſatisfaction to the humble and thankful, than the moſt ample poſſeſſions to the proud and impatient.

Nearly allied to the above virtue, is the government of your paſſions, and therefore of this I ſhall ſay but little. Every one muſt be ſenſible how important it is, both for the ſucceſs of your worldly callings and your uſefulneſs in public life, to have your paſſions in due ſubjection. Men of ſurious and ungoverned tempers, prone to excels in attachment and reſentment, either as to perſons or things, are ſeldom ſucceſsful in their purſuits, or reſpected and uſeful in their ſtations. Perſons of ungoverned paſſions are almoſt always fickle and changeable in their meaſures, which is of all things the moſt fatal to important undertakings. Theſe generally require time and patience to bring them to perfection. As to public and political life in particular, the neceſſity of full government is ſo great and ſo univerſally acknowledged

knowledged, that it is uſual to impute it in eminent men, not to principle, but to addreſs and policy. It is commonly ſaid, that politicians have no paſſions. Without enquiring into this, I ſhall only ſay, that whatever truth may be in it, it is ſtill in favour of my argument. The hypocriſy does honour to the virtue. If the appearance be ſo neceſſary or ſo uſeful, what muſt be the value of the reality?

I will here take an opportunity of confuting, or at leaſt correcting a common ſaying or proverbial ſentiment, many of which indeed that obtain belief in a blinded world, are nothing but falſe colouring and deception. It is uſual to ſay, in defence of ſudden and violent paſſion, that it is better to ſpeak freely and openly, than to harbour and cover ſecret heart malice. Perhaps I might admit that this would be true, if the inward rage were to be as violent, and continue as long and return as often as indulged paſſion. Every perſon muſt agree, that wherever there is a deep and laſting hatred, that never forgets nor forgives, but waits for the opportunity of vengeance, it deſerves to be conſidered as a temper truly infernal. But in moſt inſtances of offence between man and man, to reſtrain the tongue is the way to govern the heart. If you do not make mention of an injury, you will truly and ſpeedily forgive it, and perhaps literally forget it. Rage is in this reſpect like a fire; if a vent is given to it, it will increaſe and ſpread while there is

fuel to conſume, but if you can confine and ſtifle it, you will completely extinguiſh it.

To the government of the paſſions ſucceeds the government of the tongue. This indeed will in a great meaſure, be the effect of the former, and therefore is recommended by all the ſame arguments; yet it deſerves very particular attention ſeparately as a maxim of prudence. There are great indiſcretions in ſpeech, that do not ariſe from paſſion, but from inattention and want of judgment as to the propriety of time and place, and indeed many other ſources. I would therefore earneſtly recommend to you, to habituate yourſelves to reſtraint in this reſpect, eſpecially in the early part of life. 'Be ſwift to hear,' ſays Solomon, 'and ſlow to ſpeak.' Forwardneſs in ſpeech is always thought an aſſuming thing in youth, and in promiſcuous companies, is often conſidered as an inſult as well as an indiſcretion. It is very common for the world in general, and ſtill more ſo for men of judgment and penetration, to form an opinion of a character on the whole, from ſome one circumſtance; and I think there are few things more unfavourable in this way, than a talkative diſpoſition. If the firſt time I am in company, eſpecially with a young man, he talks inceſſantly, and takes the whole converſation to himſelf, I ſhall hardly be brought to have a good opinion of him, whether what he ſays be good or evil, ſenſe or nonſenſe. There are ſome perſons, who, one might ſay, give away

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so much wisdom in their speech, that they leave none behind to govern their actions.

But the chief danger of an ungoverned tongue, is, that it kindles the fire of contention among others, and makes enemies to a man's self. Solomon says, 'Where no tale-bearer is, the strife 'ceaseth.' A little experience will shew you, how unsafe it is to use much freedom in speech with absent persons. In that case you put yourself wholly in the power of those that hear you, and are in danger, not only from their treachery or malice, but from their mistakes, ignorance and imprudence. Perhaps it would be too rigid to say, that you ought never to speak to a man's prejudice in his absence, what you would be unwilling to say in his presence. Some exceptions to this rule, might easily be conceived. But both prudence and candour require that you should be very reserved in this respect, and either adhere strictly to the rule, or be sure that good reasons will justify a departure from it.

This will be a very proper place to give you some directions, as to the most proper conduct when you suffer from the tongues of others. Many and grievous are the complaints of what men suffer from the envenomed shafts of envy and malice. And there certainly is a strong disposition in some to invent, and in many to believe slanderous falsehoods. The prevalence of party, either in religion or politics, never fails to produce a plentiful crop of this poisonous weed.

One of the moſt important rules upon this ſubject is, that when an accuſation is in any degree well-founded, or ſuſpicious appearances have given any occaſion for it, the firſt duty is to reform what is really wrong, and keep at a diſtance from the diſputed limit.

This will bring good out of evil, and turn an injury into a benefit. But in caſes, as it may often happen, when the ſlander is perfectly groundleſs, I hold it to be in general the beſt way wholly to deſpiſe it. Time and the power of truth, will of themſelves do juſtice in almoſt every caſe of this kind; but if you ſhew an impatience under it, a diſpoſition to reſent it, or a ſolicitude to refute it, the far greateſt part of mankind will believe it not the leſs but the more. If ſlander were a plant or an animal, I would ſay it was of a very ſtrange nature, for that it would very eaſily die, but could not eaſily be killed. It diſcovers a greatneſs of mind and a conſcious dignity to deſpiſe ſlanders, which of itſelf commands reſpect; whereas to be either offended or diſtreſſed by them, ſhews a weakneſs not amiable, whether the accuſation be true or falſe.

This rule I do not ſay is wholly without exception; there may be caſes where vindications may be neceſſary and effectual, but they are not many; and I think I have ſeen in the courſe of my life, reaſon to make the following diſtinction: If the accuſation or ſlander be ſpecial, and relate

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to a particular fact, fixed by time, place and other circumstances, and if it be either wholly false or essentially mistaken in its nature and tendency, the matter may be explained and justice may be done. But if it be a general character, that happens to be imputed to a man, he ought to attempt no refutation of it but by conduct; the more he complains of it, the more he speaks of it, the more he denies it, it will be the more believed. For example, if it be affirmed that a man spoke profanely in a certain company at a certain place and time, when he was not present at all, it may be easily and completely refuted; but if he is accused of being proud, contentious, covetous, or deceitful, although these accusations are pretended to be supported by a train of facts, it is better to let them wholly alone, and suffer his conduct to speak for itself. There are instances in history of accusations brought with much plausibility and urged with great vehemence, which yet have been either from the beginning disbelieved or by time confuted; which occasioned the Latin proverb, 'Magna est veritas et 'prævalebit.*

All the above-mentioned particulars may be said to be the happy effects of wisdom and benevolence united, or rather perhaps, in the light in which they have been stated to you, they are chiefly the proper fruits of that wisdom which is "profitable to direct." But I must add another advice, which is the immediate effect of benevo-

lence and good-will, that is, be ready to aſſiſt others and do good as you have opportunity. As every thing is liable to be abuſed, ſometimes the maxims of prudence take a wrong direction, and cloſe the heart againſt impreſſions of ſympathy and tenderneſs towards others in diſtreſs. Sometimes indeed, the coolneſs and compoſure of ſpirit, and that ſelf-command which is the effect of reflection and experience, is miſtaken for a callous and unfeeling heart, though it is a very different thing. To give way to the agitation of paſſion, even under the fineſt feelings, is the way to prevent inſtead of promoting uſefulneſs. A parent, overwhelmed with ſurpriſe and anxiety, at a calamitous accident that has befallen a child, ſhall be incapable either of reflection or activity, and ſhall ſometimes even need the aſſiſtance which he ought to give. But independently of this, there are certainly ſome perſons who contract a habit of indifference as to the wants or deſires of others, and are not willing to put themſelves to any inconvenience, unleſs their own particular concerns may be promoted at the ſame time.

In oppoſition to this, I mean to recommend to you a diſpoſition to oblige, not merely by civil expreſſions and an affable deportment, but by taking a real intereſt in the affairs of others. Be not unwilling to lend your advice, your aſſiſtance, your intereſt to thoſe that need them. Thoſe who cannot ſpare pecuniary aſſiſtance, may do many

many acts of valuable friendship. Let every neighbour perceive that you are not ready to quarrel needlessly, nor insist pertinaciously on trifles; and if you live to obtain credit and influence, let them be employed to assist the deserving of every class. If you undertake to do the business of others, attend to it with the same fidelity, and if possible, with greater punctuality than you would to your own. Some are ready to excuse or justify a contrary conduct, by complaining of the ingratitude or injustice of mankind. But in my opinion, these complaints are contrary to truth and experience. There may be many particular persons both ungrateful and unjust; but in the world in general, there will be found a clearness of discernment, and an exactness of retribution. Our Saviour tells us with respect to one fault, that of rash judging, what is equally true as to injuries of every kind, 'with what 'measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you 'again: good measure pressed down and shaken 'together and running over, shall men give in-'to your bosom'. This, in my opinion, may and ought to be understood both ways: as the churlish Nabal generally meets with his match, so persons of a humane and friendly disposition, shall reap the fruits of it to them or theirs. The truth is, the disposition itself is not in its perfection, but when there is no regard to an immediate return. If you give, looking for a speedy recompence, it is not giving, but selling. You

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may, however, ſafely truſt to the promiſe of God: 'Caſt thy bread upon the waters, for thou ſhalt 'find it after many days.' I have known many inſtances of kindneſſes that were both remembered and requited, after they had been long forgotten by him who beſtowed them. Nay ſometimes they may be repaid in another generation. It is no inconſiderable legacy for a man to leave to his children, that he had always been a friend to others, and never refuſed his aſſiſtance to thoſe who ſtood in need of it.

It will not be an improper place, here to introduce a few words upon a ſubject, which has been often handled by writers of the firſt claſs: I mean private friendſhip. Some writers againſt religion, have actually made it an objection againſt Chriſtianity, that it does not recommend private friendſhip or the love of our country. If this were true, it would be no fault, becauſe the univerſal benevolence recommended by the goſpel, includes all private affections, when they are conſiſtent with it, and is far ſuperior to them when they are contrary to it. But in fact, the inſtances of private friendſhip mentioned and alluded to in ſcripture, are a ſufficient recommendation of it, and even our bleſſed Saviour himſelf is ſaid to have diſtinguiſhed the youngeſt of his diſciples with particular affection. I will therefore obſerve with moſt authors, that there is no true friendſhip, but what is founded upon virtuous principles, and directed to virtuous purpoſes. To

love

love a person who is not worthy of love, is not a virtue but an error. Neither is there any dependence to be placed, in trying cases, upon persons unprincipled at bottom. There never was a true friend who was not an honest man. But besides this important truth, it is further to be observed, that there is a species of friendship which is neither founded on virtue nor vice, but mere weakness of mind. Some persons having no resources in themselves, are obliged to have recourse to some other, upon whom they may lean, and without whom they seem as if they could neither think, act, nor even exist. This sort of friendship is to be seen particularly in princes and persons of high rank, and is generally called favouritism; but the same thing may be observed in all ranks, though, in the lower, it is not so conspicuous. We may say of it, that it is like some of those plants that are false and spurious in their kind, which have some of the appearances, but want the most valuable and essential qualities of those that are genuine. Such friendships are commonly contracted by caprice or accident, and uncertain in their duration, being liable to be dissolved by the same means. Valuable friendship is the result of judgment as well as affection; it is one of the greatest comforts of life as well as one of the greatest ornaments to human nature, and its genuineness may be discerned by the following mark—that though it is particular, it is not exclusive. When there is a great, but virtuous

tuous attachment to a person who deserves it, it will make a man not less but more friendly to all others, as opportunity or circumstances shall call him to serve them.

You will perhaps be surprised that as I have so often expressed a desire of your being accomplished in every respect, that I have heretofore said nothing or but little on that politeness and grace in behaviour, which is so much talked of, and which, in some late writings, has been so highly extolled. What has been already explained to you, I hope will lay the foundation for the most solid, valuable and durable politeness. Think of others as reason and religion require you, and treat them as it is your duty to do, and you will not be far from a well-polished behaviour. As to any thing further, that is external in mode and propriety of carriage, it can never be learned but by intercourse with the best company. As to the writings above referred to, the chief of which are Rochefoucault's Maxims, and Chesterfield's Letters, I think of them as of many other free writings, that when viewed properly, they may be as useful, as by being viewed otherwise, they are generally pernicious. They contain a digested system of hypocrisy, and betray such pride and self-sufficiency, and such hatred or contempt of mankind, as may well be an antidote against the poison which they mean to convey. Nay, one would think the publication of such sentiments is ridiculous, because it is telling

ling you that they desire to be polite, and at the same time that this politeness consists in taking you by the weak side, and displaying their own address by over-reaching yours.

I must also observe, that such writers give, in general, a very unjust as well as dishonourable view of nature and mankind. I remember indeed Dean Swift says,

"As Rochefoucault his maxims drew
From nature, I believe them true."

What must I say to this? shall I say that he did not draw his maxims from nature? I will not, because I think he did. Am I obliged then to admit them to be true? By no means. It is nature, but it is just such a view of nature, as a man without principle must take. It is in himself, that all the error and exaggeration is to be found.

Those who discover an universal jealousy, and indiscriminate contempt for mankind in general, give very little reason to think well of themselves. Probably men are neither so good as they pretend, nor so bad as they are often thought to be. At any rate, candour in sentiment as well as conduct, as it is an important duty of religion, so it is a wise maxim for the conduct of life; and I believe these two things are very seldom if ever found either separate from or opposed to each other.

The last advice that I shall offer you, is to preserve a sacred and inviolable regard to sincerity and

and truth. Thoſe who have received their education here, or at leaſt who have completed it, muſt know how much pains have been taken to eſtabliſh the univerſal and unalterable obligation of truth. This is not however mentioned now to introduce the general ſubject, or to ſhew the guilt, folly and danger of deliberate intereſted falſhood, but to warn you againſt the ſmaller breaches of truth now ſo very common, ſuch as want of punctuality in appointments; breach of promiſe in ſmall matters; officious falſhoods, that is, deceiving children, ſick perſons or others for their good; jocular deceptions, which are not intended to continue long, or to be materially hurtful to others. Not one of theſe is without ſin before God, and they are much more hurtful than is commonly ſuppoſed. So very ſacred a thing indeed is truth, that the very ſhadow of departure from it is to be avoided. Suppoſe a man only to expreſs his preſent purpoſe as to futurity, for example, to ſay he will go to ſuch a place to-morrow, though there is no proper obligation given, nor any right to require performance, yet if he does ſo often, he will acquire the character of levity and unſteadineſs, which will operate much to his diſadvantage. Let me therefore recommend to you a ſtrict, univerſal and ſcrupulous regard to truth.—It will give dignity to your character—it will put order into your affairs—it will excite the moſt unbounded confidence, ſo that whether your view be your own intereſt, or the

the service of others, it promises you the most assured success. I am also persuaded, that there is no virtue that has a more powerful influence upon every other, and certainly, there is none by which you can draw nearer to God himself, whose distinguishing character is, that he will not, and he cannot lie.

THE HISTORY OF A CORPORATION OF SERVANTS*.

Discovered a few Years ago in the Interior Parts of SOUTH AMERICA.

Containing some very Surprising Events and Extraordinary Characters.

INTRODUCTION.

THE skill of an author, like that of a merchant, lies chiefly in judging with readiness and certainty, what kind of commodities, and in what

* The Reader will find himself obliged to the Author of the following History, for the pains he hath taken to render it as entertaining, and sentimental as possible. With this view he hath entirely

what quantity, any particular age or place is able and willing to receive. This I have, of late, made very much my study, with regard to our own age and country, and the result of my enquiry is as follows. There are two sorts of subjects for which there is a general demand in Great Britain at this time, viz. 1. Biography, if any thing may be so called that gives an account of the lives of persons that never existed, but in the imagination of the authors. This is, indeed, a most fruitful subject, and under the various titles of Histories, Lives, Adventures, Memoirs, &c. teaches people how to live after any imaginable plan. 2. The other is the formation of schemes and projects, to be carried on by subscription, for the good of mankind, which never were so favourably received as at present, the abortion or mismanagement of nine in ten of them not having in the least abated the ardor of the publick. If any be of opinion, that new discoveries in the science of morals, for the support of infidelity, are as favourably received as any of these, such must be told, that they are but superficial ob-

tirely avoided the use of foreign names, often hard to pronounce, and when pronounced wholly without meaning. Instead of this, when he had occasion to mention particular ranks of men, offices, or customs, he chose to express them by what did most exactly correspond with them in our own country. By this means the narrative, discumbered of definitions or circumlocutions, is rendered quite easy and intelligible.

ſervers, or under the prejudice of religious enthuſiaſm. The diſcoveries here pointed at, have been of late years ſo various, ſo contradictory and ſo ſhort-lived, that they really raiſe very little curioſity. As an inſtance of this, the reader is deſired to recollect if he can, the moſt extraordinary thing of the kind that ever was attempted. A great living author, David Hume Eſq. not long ago, made health, cleanlineſs, and broad ſhoulders capital virtues, and a running ſore an unpardonable crime; yet was it but little taken notice of when firſt publiſhed, and is now almoſt wholly forgotten.

Therefore, an author is undoubtedly happy who hath hit upon, or happens to be furniſhed with a ſubject ſuited to the taſte of the age. This I humbly preſume to be my own caſe. I have had the good fortune, lately to obtain diſtinct information of a moſt extraordinary hiſtory, which alſo may perhaps lay a foundation for ſome new ſcheme, or, at leaſt, for mending and cobling thoſe which are now cracked and old. The only misfortune that it labours under is, that it is true; for I remember the lofty and ſonorous Earl of Shafteſbury, whoſe memory I greatly revere, tells us there is much more truth in fiction than in fact. The meaning of this is, that authors of taſte and genius like himſelf, employing their fancy in delineating feigned characters, give ordinarily a juſter view of nature than tedious relaters of what really happened.

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This fofs, however, I truft, will be abundantly made up by the extraordinary and wonderful nature of the paſſages I am to relate, which, it is to be hoped, will have the effect of fiction in enlivening the imagination of the writer, and, indeed, very poſſibly, may be miſtaken for fiction by many readers. The truth is, I hope there is a ſingular felicity in my ſubject in every reſpect, If the excellency of hiſtory, according to Lord Shafteſbury, lies in its being like fiction, and the excellency of fiction in its being like real facts, according to all other men, the ſubject in hand muſt needs excel, as it partakes of both theſe characters. It will be like truth, becauſe it is true; and it will be like fiction, becauſe the ſame train of events, perhaps, never happened in any other place or nation.

To introduce myſelf to my ſubject, and inform the reader how I came by the knowledge of it, he may be pleaſed to recollect, that in the year 1741, when Commodore (afterwards Lord) Anſon made a voyage round the world, one of the ſhips of his ſquadron, callad the Wager, was caſt away upon a deſert iſland in the South Seas. The greateſt part of the crew who were ſaved lengthened the long-boat, and made a long and dangerous voyage through the ſtreights of Magellan, to Brazil. As they were often obliged to ſwim aſhore for proviſions and water, it happened that, at one time, there were to the number of fourteen of them aſhore upon a part of the coaſt very

far South, near the mouth of the ſtreights. Having ſtayed all night, unfortunately next morning the wind blew ſo hard in ſhore, that only ſix of the fourteen were able to get aboard, and the veſſel was obliged to go away and leave the other eight.

It is needleſs here to inſiſt upon the various accidents they met with in this perilous ſituation: the difficulty of obtaining food, without which they muſt very ſoon have died: the mean and ſcanty proviſion with which nature will be ſuſtained, when there is no more or better to be had: the inventive faculty of man for ſupplying his wants when reduced to abſolute extremity, and a hundred other things which have been repreſented in all poſſible lights by other writers of adventures. Let it ſuffice, therefore, to ſay that, in proceſs of time, four of them were killed by the inhabitants of the country, and the remaining four taken priſoners. After changing their maſters ſeveral times, they came at laſt into the hands of one who carried them a great way off to the capital of an empire, and the court of a powerful prince. There they lived many years, learned the language, and had occaſion to ſee the manners of the country. Two of them, at laſt, acquired ſuch a degree of favour, that, in compliance with their earneſt requeſt, they were ſent to the Portugueze ſettlements, and came from thence to Great Britain.

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One of thoſe perſons, who was a man of tolerable education, at well as good ſenſe and comprehenſion, coming to live in my neighbourhood, communicated to me what follows of this hiſtory. In general he told me the conduct and characters of men, bating ſome little differences of fashion and modes of addreſs, which are ever changing in every country, were much like what they are among ourſelves. Court favour was precarious and changeable. Intereſt and ambition prevailed more in obtaining places of power and profit, than modeſt and peaceable merit. Cold and ſober men gathered wealth, and crept up, by ſlow but ſure ſteps, to ſtation and dignity; while the lively ſprightly fellows threw away all that they had, and ſoon became contemptible to others and uſeleſs to themſelves. The knowledge of the world was of very little benefit; for tho' every claſs of men could clearly diſcern the errors that adhered to thoſe of a different rank, they could ſcarcely obſerve, and never would imitate their commendable qualities. For example, ſays he, a profuſe, diſeaſed, needy Lord would ſpeak with infinite contempt of the meanneſs of ſoul, and hardneſs of heart frequently to be found in traders and men of buſineſs; but never once thought of following their example in ſobriety, application, and regularity in the diſtribution of their time, to which they manifeſtly owed all their ſucceſs. So that, upon the whole, he concluded that human nature in all ages and in

in all places was the same. A sage remark the reader will say, but I can easily remember to have heard it before.

There was, however, one class of men in that nation, whose constitution as a body, and many of whose characters and practices were of the most extraordinary kind, viz. the SERVANTS. Their state and conduct, at the time which fell under his own observation, were so singular that they excited his curiosity; and induced him to enquire with great care into their condition, as far back as history could trace them. This is what I am now to communicate to the publick, being willing that my book should be buried in oblivion, or burned with disgrace, if a story can be produced equal or even similar to it in any other age or country.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Of the original State of the Servants, and their Erection into a Corporation.

IN very early times, of which there are ſtill ſome accounts handed down by tradition, the Servants were in a ſtate not much different from what they are at preſent among us. It does not appear that ever they were ſlaves, or were treated with exceſſive rigour or ſeverity. They were trained up in ſome acquaintance with, and applied themſelves to ſuch work as they ſeemed to be fitted for by the turn of their minds, and the ſtrength or agility of their bodies. They were choſen or hired by every family as they pleaſed, made a voluntary agreement, and were employed in doing what was neceſſary of every kind. They were paid as they and the family could agree, eating of their own labours, and were cheriſhed and careſſed in proportion as they deſerved it. In caſes of remarkable neglect diſobedience or miſbehaviour they were turned away. This, indeed, happened but ſeldom, for they were in general honeſt, ſober and induſtrious. They had the intereſt of their maſters at heart, nay, ſo remarkable were ſome of them in theſe times for fidelity, that (it is reported) they ſeemed to have

as much or more pleaſure in doing their work, as in receiving their wages.

But it happened, ſome ages ago, that one of their princes was ſaved from a formidable conſpiracy againſt his life and crown, juſt upon the point of execution, by the fidelity and courage of a ſervant. The prince was a man of warm heart, and an uncommonly generous diſpoſition. Not content with bountifully rewarding his benefactor by kindneſs to himſelf and family, he conceived a deſign of perpetuating the memory of the fact, and ſhewing his gratitude by doing ſomething in favour of the whole order or body of men. For this purpoſe, being poſſeſt of abſolute power, after conſulting upon it for ſome time, he eſtabliſhed the following regulations, not doubting that they would be highly beneficial to his ſubjects in general, as well as the ſervants in particular.

1. It was ordered that the wages of ſervants ſhould be conſiderably augmented, and fixed to a certain rate in all the king's dominions. This was evidently dictated by compaſſion. He obſerved that it was very hard and unequal, that thoſe who were conſtantly employed in labour, who promoted the intereſt of their maſters ſo much, ſhould notwithſtanding live ſo poorly; that they ſhould have nothing but the coarſeſt diet, and no more money than was barely neceſſary to purchaſe the meaneſt cloathing. He uſed when the matter was under deliberation, to rea-

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ſon thus; 'For my part I think a king ought 'to have the heart of a man; I conſider the ſervants as my fellow creatures, and am deſirous 'that they ſhould taſte ſome of thoſe pleaſures 'and delicacies of life, which they contribute ſo 'largely to procure for the accommodation of 'others.'

He alſo obſerved that intereſt as well as compaſſion dictated the ſame thing; that keeping them poor would entirely diſpirit them, and make them do their duty in the moſt careleſs and ſlothful manner, by which their maſters muſt receive manifeſt prejudice. On the other hand, a good and ſecure proviſion would give them great vigour and alacrity. He ventured to foretel, that a third part increaſe of their ſalary would increaſe their work in a far greater proportion, ſo that the publick would be gainers by this ſeeming burden; beſides that ſuch a fixed proviſion would free them from all temptation to pilfering and ſtealing, and ſo be an improvement upon their honeſty as well as activity.

Another advantage he propoſed to reap by this meaſure was, increaſing the number of ſervants. It was well enough remembered that, at no very diſtant period, the kingdom had ſuffered not a little from the ſcarcity of ſervants; ſo that the land lay uncultivated, and many branches of buſineſs neglected. Now it was impoſſible to avoid ſeeing that this meaſure muſt increaſe the number of ſervants, by inducing them to come into the

the kingdom from the moſt diſtant places, as well as encouraging them to marry and propagate, and bleſs their country with a multitude of uſeful hands.

Nay, he even called in the aid of luxury to enforce his argument, alledging, that keeping the ſervants poor, muſt make them ſordid and naſty, ſo that it would be odious to people of taſte and elegance to have them about their perſons, or even to ſee them in their houſes. But by carrying the propoſed deſign into execution, he ſaid, he hoped to ſee the ſervants in general genteel, well dreſſed, well behaved, and converſible men. That this muſt be an advantage in particular to families in the country, who were conſiderably diſtant from one another, and, in certain ſeaſons of the year, could have very little intercourſe: nay even, that in cities and places of greater reſort, it would be better, in many reſpects, to have opportunities of converſation within doors, than to be always obliged to ſeek ſociety abroad.

In ſhort, he ſuppoſed that the regulation now eſtabliſhed would put an entire period to all the murmurings and complaints of ſervants, and their deſire of ſhifting from one family to another, which was a ſource of daily inconveniences. They muſt be touched, ſays he, with a ſenſe of gratitude for ſo unexpected and ſo happy a change in their ſituation, and will therefore be thoroughly content and 'never aſk for more.'

2. Having the public good all along at heart,

as much as the advantage of the Servants, be ordered ſchools and places of exerciſe to be built, and maſters appointed to train up Servants and fit them for their ſeveral truſts. There were different tracts of education chalked out for all different ſorts of employments. It was particularly expected of the directors of theſe academies, that they would ſelect the Servants fit for every branch, and both educate and diſpoſe of them according as their genius ſhould intimate they were moſt capable. As for example, for cooks, waiting men, and other domeſtick ſervants, and grooms, gardiners, and labouring men of all ſorts without doors.

The advantage of this regulation, in both its parts, ſeemed very evident. Education, it was ſaid, is all in all. Education makes the man, and makes the Servant. It will therefore prepare them for their work. They will enter upon it expert and proven, very much to the publick emolument; inſtead of being aukward and unhandy for ſome time, till experience has given them facility, or, perhaps, retaining ſome meaſure of ruſticity and inactivity through their whole lives.

It ſeemed alſo a matter of great moment, that no man ſhould be ſuffered to profeſs what he could not do, but that he ſhould be confined to that only which he could beſt do. Neither was it proper that this ſhould be left to the caprice of families, or the ambition and preſumption of the

Servants themſelves. And it was never once imagined the maſters of academies would be defective in judgment and impartiality, on their part.

3. The third and laſt regulation he eſtabliſhed, was ordering the ſervants to be erected by charter into a large corporation, containing many ſmaller bodies and ſocieties within it. To this corporation he gave authority over the ſeveral members of which it was compoſed, and eſtabliſhed a complete ſubordination. This was thought a piece of admirable wiſdom and policy. They were to be ſtrictly watchful over one another, and it was ſuppoſed they would get all the advantage in this ſhape, which men united in ſociety have over thoſe in a ſtate of nature. The ſeveral claſſes and diviſions of the corporation were to try the ſufficiency of all Servants before they were admitted, and had power to turn them off when they miſbehaved or neglected their work. That this might proceed with the greater regularity, they were every one ſecured by law in their employments. They were not left in a vague dependent ſtate: a ſervant once hired by any family could not be turned away but by an order of his fellow-ſervants, to whom all complaints of his conduct were to be made, and by whom they were to be judged.

The whole was founded upon the moſt excellent reaſons. Who ſo proper to judge of the capacity

pacity and diligence of Servants as those who are Servants themselves? Who can be supposed so attentive to their conduct, or so jealous of their behaviour, since the character of particulars must evidently reflect either disgrace or credit on the whole collective body?

CHAP. II.

Of the Effects produced by these Regulations.

AT first, and indeed for a considerable time after these regulations were established, experience seemed to confirm the wisdom as well as generosity of the prince, and to discover their happy consequences every day. Servants were trained up and instructed in every branch of business, and were very expert in their work. They understood the cause, the reason and the end of every thing, and could talk upon it in a most intelligent and consistent manner. They did every thing with much exactness, and had plainly a far greater air of neatness and elegance than formerly. The fields were dressed and trimmed to great perfection; the utensils of the houses were all brightned and put in order; the outsides of the houses and avenues to them were all adorned in a very pretty and fanciful manner. They were not content with what was barely profitable to their masters, but paid also a due regard to show and appearance. Persons who travelled were exceedingly delighted, and the proprietors were not a little proud of the change; for every house was like a little palace, and every country-seat like a little paradise. Thus far the Servants seemed to be much upon their honour, and, from

a ſenſe of gratitude to the emperor, endeavoured to behave themſelves with great care and diligence; ſo that every body, as well as themſelves ſincerely rejoiced in the change of their ſtate.

But alas! how ſhort-ſighted are human creatures! this univerſal ſatisfaction did not laſt long. It was quickly ſeen, notwithſtanding ſo good a beginning, that the regulations laid down would but ill anſwer the end propoſed. The change to the worſe took its riſe from the enlargement of their wages, which yet ſeemed, at firſt, to be the chief and moſt reaſonable article of the regulations: for, after they had obtained good wages, and the beſt of food and accommodation, ſome of them began to grow fat, and conſequently lazy. When they were ſuddenly called, ſometimes by dozing and ſleeping they did not hear at all: and when they did hear were very ſlow in their motions, and always ready furniſhed with an excuſe for their neglect; or, perhaps, raiſed ſome very ſtrong objections to what they were deſired to do. When they were ſent of an errand, they took a long time before they returned; and yet would poſitively ſtand to it, that it was impoſſible to return ſooner. If this was not ſatisfying, they would, in a great rage, before they delivered their meſſage, return and meaſure the ground they had traverſed in order to determine the diſpute.

Having now more to eat or drink than formerly, they behoved to take more time to it;

and ſo the hours of their work were very much diminiſhed. This ſeemed to them not only reaſonable but neceſſary; and great diſputes aroſe upon it with the families in which they ſerved. The families in general gave them to underſtand that they expected greater diligence and activity, as they were now better paid than before, whereas the Servants counted that highly ridiculous; for with them it was a good point, that the more liberally they were paid, they ought to do the leſs for it. It is needleſs to enlarge upon this part of the ſubject; let it ſuffice to ſay, that, in general, having now got ſo good proviſion made for them, they began not to ſerve but to live. The delicacies of the world began to captivate their hearts, and inſtead of ſatisfying themſelves with neceſſaries, and being uſeful in their generation, they be thought themſelves of enjoying what had thus ſo luckily fallen to their ſhare.

Changes in all reſpects came on inſenſibly. It was before obſerved that one advantage propoſed by the regulations was the increaſe of the number of ſervants. This effect indeed did follow with a witneſs. Whereas before the country was not overſtocked with Servants, and families were at great pains in looking out for proper ones, now they increaſed to an almoſt incredible number. Not only was there a great confluence of ſtrangers, from diſtant places, but many of the inhabitants, not inconſiderable in point of ſtation, found

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it their interest to become Servants. Now you would every where see them going about and soliciting employment, and very wonderful were the arts they sometimes used to obtain it. Of these I shall say nothing in this preliminary part of the history, because I shall probably have afterwards a better opportunity to introduce them.

As the state of things, and the way of thinking began to alter, the language and manner of speaking altered also at the same time. In former times they used to speak of getting a master, or being hired, or getting an employment; now they spake of getting into bread, of getting a salary, a settlement, or a living. I know nothing that resembles this difference so much as the difference between our way of speaking in Scotland, and what is usual in our neighbour country of England about servants. Here we speak of a servant's getting into service; in England they call it getting a place, and a footman turned away, they term, with the highest propriety, a footman out of place.

Things having once come into this situation, it happened with these Servants as it happens with all men when once they begin to gratify their desires: they became inordinate, excessive and insatiable. Instead of being content with what they had obtained, they began to fall upon all imaginable methods of increasing their revenues. They contrived an infinite number of perquisites besides their ordinary wages. When a family had

had, of their own free motion, beſtowed any mark of favour upon a good ſervant, the thing was immediately ſpread abroad, and all other families were harraſſed with complaints, and teazed to death by their ſervants till the ſame was beſtowed upon them. They would often, in a clandeſtine manner, lay hold of ſome of the goods of the family and appropriate them to their own uſe; and, when it came at laſt to be diſcovered, they would take the advantage of their own covetouſneſs, and prove clearly, that, by immemorial cuſtom, it belonged to them as their due. Where families were ignorant, they would affirm with the greateſt boldneſs, that ſuch and ſuch were the privileges of ſervants in all other places, and by that means procure their conſent. When they were not only ignorant but timid and cowardly, they would go a ſhort way to work, and threaten to burn their houſes to the ground if they did not comply with every demand.

But, what they excelled moſt in were the arts of flattery and deceit in rich families. Such as got near great men would ſtand as it were in perpetual admiration of the beauty of their perſons, the gracefulneſs of their manners, and the excellence of their underſtandings. The ſervants of ſome perſons of great rank had a cuſtom of making up a long liſt, every day, of the virtues which ſuch perſons had that day put in practice, and reading it over to them next morning before they got out of bed, which was obſerved to ren-

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der them quite facile and tractable for a long time after.

They perſuaded the credulous, that the publick good was inſeparably connected with their thriving and opulence. 'Induſtry,' ſaid they, 'is the 'ſource of wealth to a nation. Servants, every 'body muſt acknowledge, are the means of in-'duſtry: thence it follows undeniably, that the 'more ſervants the better.' By the help of this argument they obtained, that many new eſtabliſhments were made for Servants. And ſuch was the faſcination that prevailed, that frequently there were ſettlements made for the proviſion of menial ſervants in a wilderneſs, where there was hardly a ſingle creature to ſerve; and of huſbandmen upon a ſea ſhore, where there was not an inch of ground to cultivate. They alſo got about ſick and dying perſons, and by their officious ſervices, by tending them with apparent care, and by frequently and readily giving them cordials, they prevailed, that many left great legacies to them in their wills.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Continues the ſame ſubject. And particularly gives an account of a very remarkable ſtep taken by the Servants.

WHEN their poſſeſſions, privileges, and immunities were thus enlarged, they began to claim greater reſpect than formerly, and to aſſume additional titles and deſignations. Some of them would be no longer ſervants properly ſpeaking, but overſeers. They affirmed that it was eſſential to the nature of ſervants that ſome of them ſhould be overſeers, and that there could be neither order nor œconomy in a family without ſome ſuch. To this they added ſubover-ſeers, and ſeveral other officers for their aſſiſtance. They then proceeded to archoverſeers who had all the other overſeers, as well as ſervants, under their juriſdiction. At a great meeting of the whole corporation, this was determined and decreed to be, and to have been, a part of the original inſtitution of ſervitude, without which it could not poſſibly ſubſiſt.

Theſe encroachments were very patiently ſubmitted to, and, one would think, had been carried as far as the nature of the thing would admit. Yet there remained one ſtep more which exceeded every thing that had been formerly ſeen, and happened as follows. An overſeer of the capital city gathered a great many of his cotemporaries about

about him, and after begging their moſt ſerious attention to a propoſal he had to lay before them, made a ſpeech to the following purpoſe. 'Honoured and very dear Brethren, you know that 'the life of ſociety is order, and the ſoul of order is ſubordination. The greateſt ſervice, 'therefore, that we can do to our corporation, 'is to keep up the ſubordination of offices among us with as much ſtrictneſs, and to make 'it as compleat and extenſive as poſſible. There 'are no ſtructures which ſtand ſo ſecurely, as 'thoſe that are built in the form of a cone or a 'pyramid, becauſe they have a broad baſe, and 'gradually leſſen towards the top. Neither of 'theſe, however, is complete, but maimed or 'imperfect, unleſs it be carried on till it terminate 'in a point. Therefore, the ſubordination of 'our ſociety can never be entire and perfect, 'till it end in a ſingle perſon, who may unite the 'whole, and enjoy abſolute uncontroulable dominion. And, as the perſon who is on the 'top of a pyramid muſt neceſſarily ſee farther 'than thoſe who ſtand upon any of the lower 'ſteps of it, ſo the perſon who is at the head of 'the whole ſociety of ſervants muſt, in virtue of 'his office, ſurpaſs them all in wiſdom and ſagacity. Nay, as this order is of the inſtitution of 'nature, and as a laſt reſort or ſupreme judge is 'neceſſary to determine controverſies in any ſociety, ſo I do think it may be proved that nature, 'to be uniform and conſiſtent in her operations

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'must immediately inspire the person so exalted 'with infallible knowledge and a sort of infinite 'mind.' Now I hope it is very plain, that I my-'self am the person to whom, and to my success-'sors in office, this power and authority do of 'right belong.'

One of the assembly then rises up and says; 'I 'greatly suspect this will be attended with no 'good effects upon the interest of the Servants in 'general, not to mention the interest of the 'families, which, from a sense of duty to the 'corporation, I intirely give up. At any rate, it 'ought not to be gone into precipitately; for it 'is a prodigious innovation.' 'Quite otherwise,' says the former speaker; 'for tho' I have conde-'scended to reason with you, and shew you that 'in the nature of things there must be one who, 'like the top-stone of a pyramid, is incumbent 'on the whole body; as also, that this can be 'no other than myself, who dwell in the centre 'of this vast empire; yet I can give undeniable 'evidence that it hath been always so in fact, 'since there was an empire here, and since there 'were Servants.' The objector then shook his head, as who should say, that is far from being a clear point, and seemed to wonder from whence this evidence was to proceed. The other immediately goes on, 'It is as clear as the sun; for, tho' 'all the records that contained this regulation 'are lost, yet I very well remember, that my 'nurse told me before I was two years of age, that

'that her grandmother's first cousin-german af-
'sured her it was fact.'

However unwilling, one would think, men should be to give up their natural rights, and submit to usurped authority, yet to it was that they soon agreed to this scheme; and, indeed, it appeared to have been not ill projected for their own ends. It is not to be conceived at how speedy a pace they advanced, in acquiring and extending their dominion. They quite inverted the use of language; for when they spoke of the family they always meant the Servants: or, if they said any thing that would tend to the good of the family, it was to be understood, that it would promote the increase of the wages, privileges and immunities of the Servants. In many places the Servants grew upon the families, and turned them out altogether. In some of the most delicious spots of the country, you would have seen fine seats and inclosures wholly possessed by Servants, who absolutely refused to do any work, but gave themselves up to lazy contemplation. If any body had presumed to ask them the meaning of this, they said they were employed in studying the theory of service, and wishing that all Servants might be good, and all families well supplied.

It has been observed above, that they began their scheme by flattering the rich and great men, and endeavouring to insinuate themselves into their favour. But as soon as their power was sufficiently

ſciently eſtabliſhed, they changed their note, and treated the moſt conſiderable men of the country with great haughtineſs and contempt. They affirmed it to be abſolutely neceſſary for the publick good, that they ſhould have much honour and reſpect paid them. That, as they were undeniably the moſt uſeful rank of men, by conſequence they were the moſt honourable. Inſtead of being humble and ſubmiſſive, they inſiſted, that all the people, from the higheſt to the loweſt, ſhould pay a profound reſpect to the overſeers, archoverſeers, and other dignitaries, whoſe names I have forgot, becauſe they had neither ſenſe nor meaning. Nay, the emperor of the Servants arrived in time at ſuch power, that he made the richeſt men in the country, even the governors of provinces to tremble. He ordered them ſometimes to wipe his ſhoes; and, when they miſbehaved or ſhewed the leaſt backwardneſs, commanded them to be whipt.

When my informer mentioned this circumſtance, I could not help diſcovering much amazement at the puſillanimity of theſe people, and even modeſtly hinted ſome ſuſpicion as to the truth of the fact. He inſiſted, however, in the moſt poſitive manner, on the truth of his account; and added, that he had many things ſtill more wonderful to communicate; as an inſtance of which he affirmed, that it was not only uſual for the emperor to order great men to be whipt, but even to command them to whip themſelves. All this

this they were obliged to ſubmit to, for he had the lower ſervants, and the whole kingdom abſolutely under his influence. If any perſon or family had diſputed his will in the leaſt article, they would either, without more ado, burn the houſe and them in it, or they would wholly give over work, and neither provide them with food nor fuel, ſo that they behoved immediately to ſtarve.

What contributed not a little to eſtabliſh this uſurpation, was a very ſingular ſcheme which they fell upon while they were flattering great men, and perſuading them to make new eſtabliſhments for Servants. This was, that families ſhould not be permitted to chooſe Servants for themſelves, but that a Lord, or any other great man, ſhould have the power of nominating the Servants within a certain diſtrict. They never failed to invent plauſible reaſons for all their ſchemes. In ſupport of this it was alledged, that families were often whimſical in their choice. That ſome would prefer a ſervant becauſe he was tall, and others becauſe he was ſhort: ſome becauſe his hair was red, others becauſe it was black. That they did not know when they were well ſerved, and when they were not. That they were apt to be impoſed on by ſuch as had ſmooth tongues and could flatter them. That, if families and ſervants were in a good underſtanding, they would raiſe ſedition and ſubvert the conſtitution.

On the other hand it was thought exceeding clear, that great men would understand the interest of the country, and the capacity of Servants, much better than the vulgar. As also, that they were above all suspicion of partiality, and would be sure always to send fit and accomplished Servants to every household. But the contrary of all this was soon found by experience. They learned speedily to sell every place to the highest bidder, unless when they had a favourite or dependent to gratify, which indeed, at bottom, was the same thing. However, they were soon made dupes to the Servants, for when the profit of this sale was found out, the overseers and archoverseers gradually usurped the nomination to themselves, and at last, it came to be made an addition to the great and overgrown power of the Emperor.

It may easily be supposed, things were now in a sad situation, and they continued so, as tradition and written records assure us, for many ages. The lands lay uncultivated; the people were reduced to the greatest misery imaginable; they were sorrily cloathed and worse fed. No body prospered but the Servants, or rather, only the upper ranks of them, the noble and honourable Servants, the overseers and archoverseers. To these indeed may be added the idle and speculative sort, who were settled in hives, in the most pleasant and fruitful vallies, in every province

province. As for the poorer or loweſt claſs of ſervants, who actually did any work for the families, they were as much oppreſſed, by this time, as their maſters. Their wages were moſtly taken up by lazy overſeers, or exhauſted by heavy taxes which they were obliged to pay to the emperor, and his court.

CHAP. IV.

A terrible blow given to the Domination of the Servants; and particularly to the Power of the Emperor.

IT appears to be a fact, tho' not very well accounted for by philoſophers, that, when men have been long accuſtomed to ſlavery, they lug their chains, and become ſo blinded, as to pride themſelves in their miſery itſelf. A poor peaſant, in a neighbouring country, whoſe face is pale with hunger, and his family ſcarce covered with rags, through the oppreſſion of his prince, yet will be very ready to venture his life in vindication of the tyrant's honour, and count himſelf extremely happy to lay it down in defence of his perſon. So it happened with the people under conſideration. They were ſo deluded by theſe Servants, that, as their condition, ſo their reaſon itſelf was turned upſide down. They gloried in the uſurpation of the ſervants over them, worſhipped them often as they paſſed, and ſtoutly defended all their rights and privileges.

If by chance it happened, (as there were always ſome in every age) that one thought fit to complain of the ſloth, debauchery, avarice and tyranny of the Servants, his brethren immediately raiſed a hideous accuſation againſt him, and the ſtupid

ſtupid people generally joined in the cry. They immediately aſſiſted his fellow-ſervants to ſeize him, to impriſon him, and, according to the degree of his offence, to puniſh him. They firſt, indeed, took the moſt charitable pains to convince him of his error. If, upon this, he was willing to recant, and ſolemnly to declare that the conduct of the Servants was admirable, and the character of them all unblameable, he was diſmiſſed only with a good beating. But, if he was obſtinate, and inſiſted on telling the truth, he was carried to a dreadful ſubterraneous place, and, there, put to the moſt horrid and ſhocking tortures, which at length ended in death.

However, at laſt, this myſtery of iniquity got a terrible blow. One of the lower Servants, of an honeſt heart, and a determined reſolute temper, being filled with indignation at the oppreſſion which the reſt were guilty of, ſet himſelf to open the eyes of the publick, and expoſe their wickedneſs. He made a full diſcovery of all the frauds he had any how been acquainted with, and ſpared not the corruption of the Emperor's court. Laying down only this plain principle, that Servants were obliged to promote, at all times, the real intereſt of their maſters, he ſet the abominable conduct of the covetous blood-ſuckers in the moſt odious light. Whenever he went to a fair, or other place of public concourſe, he would get upon an eminence, and in a long diſcourſe, endeavour to rouſe the people from their lethargy,

lethargy, and inflame them with reſentment againſt their oppreſſors.

This furniſhed his brethren with an opportunity of repreſenting him as a diſturber of the peace, and loading him with innumerable calumnies. Many tumults were raiſed againſt him, and he was often in imminent danger of his life. When he had narrowly eſcaped being ſtoned in publick, they would often hire deſperadoes to aſſaſſinate him in private; and, ſometimes, attempted to bribe his intimate friends to take him off by poiſon. However, by a mixture of bravery and caution in himſelf, together with the aſſiſtance of ſome faithful friends, who ſaw how much he was promoting their intereſt, or rather, by a moſt ſingular providence, he was always brought off ſafe. At laſt, a few of the other ſervants joined him, and they together opened the eyes of ſeveral provinces of the Empire. Theſe came to a formal reſolution of caſting off the yoke of the Emperor, and ſettling the Servants upon a quite new, or rather bringing them back to the old, reaſonable and natural foundation.

This was not brought about without a moſt violent and pertinacious oppoſition. The Emperor immediately ſounded the alarm, and ſet the Servants in motion throughout all his dominions. He could not be ſuppoſed, indeed, to look upon ſuch a ſcheme with indifference; for it plainly tended to ſtrip him of a great part of his revenue and power: nor was it eaſy to ſee where it would

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despotic throne cried out against it with all his might. He sent out a proclamation, in which he affirmed, that it struck against the very being of Servants, and that the design was no less than to exterminate them from the face of the earth. He represented it as the most unnatural thing that ever was heard of, that there had been seditions and conspiracies of Servants against their masters, but a joint conspiracy of masters against their own servants, and of servants against their fellow-servants, was absolutely without precedent. He concluded with a solemn execration, devoting all who should continue in this rebellion to compleat and irretrievable ruin.

The consequence of this was a civil war in the kingdom. Many battles were fought, in which there was a dreadful slaughter on both sides, and multitudes taken prisoners, who were none of them used very well. The Emperor indeed, and his court, had a manifest advantage, by long practice, in devising the most exquisite methods of revenge and cruelty. But, to shorten my narrative, after many violent and bloody disputes, as well as useless conferences, at last some provinces agreed to keep the old way, and some established the new. Particularly, in one northern province there was, at the time of the change, a most excellent method and order established with regard to the Servants. They not only renounced the authority of the Emperor; but all overseers, archoverseers, auditors, controllers, accountants, keepers

keepers of records and other unneceſſary officers were baniſhed at once: and none ſuffered to continue but uſeful working Servants. The ſpeculative drones were expelled, and their lands given to perſons of rank and worth in the province. That regulation was aboliſhed, as extremely pernicious, which permitted lords or great men to name ſervants to others, ſo that every family choſe ſuch as beſt pleaſed themſelves, and ſuch as were well qualified for the buſineſs for which they were hired. The exorbitant increaſe of their wages was reduced, as well as all extravagant perquiſites, and only a moderate proviſion continued and ſettled.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Some account of the Reformed Eſtabliſhment, in the Northern Provinces; and the happy effects that followed upon it for a time. It begins however again to degenerate.

THE people of this province were now ſo fully convinced of the terrible conſequences of the late uſurpation, that they reſolved to uſe all poſſible precautions, to prevent the return of corruption for the future. In this the ſervants themſelves ſeemed to concur very heartily, and were, apparently, animated with a warm zeal againſt the worthleſs part of their own order. Many excellent rules were laid down in the meetings of the corporation. They were ordered under the ſevereſt penalties to apply themſelves diligently to their buſineſs; to live ſober, grave and mortified lives; to forbear all ranting, junketing and gaming. They were forbid all travelling abroad, or wandering from their families, but upon urgent occaſions, and with leave aſked and given. If any were convicted of diſhoneſty, lazineſs, or diſobedience, they were not only diſmiſſed, but ſtript of their cloathes, branded in their foreheads, and declared utterly incapable of ever being again employed.

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The greateſt ſtrictneſs imaginable was uſed in trying them, as to their ſufficiency in every branch of buſineſs for which they were hired; and very diligent enquiry made into their character for honeſty and ſincerity. When they were introduced to any family, they were then ſolemnly bound by a tremendous oath, to have the good of the family always at heart, and that they ſhould never do any thing, directly or indirectly, that might tend to its prejudice. But above all, there was a ſtrict law made, and declared to be unalterable, that no Servant ſhould be forced upon any family againſt their will. In order to ſecure, in the moſt effectual manner, the execution of theſe laws, it was reſolved, that, in the government of the corporation, there ſhould be joined with the Servants certain perſons of the moſt prudent ſort from the families. Theſe were called helpers, they had no ſalaries, but being naturally a ſort of repreſentatives of the people, it was expected they would univerſally ſupport their intereſt.

For a long time this province was exceedingly happy in their reformed conſtitution. The moſt perfect harmony ſubſiſted between maſters and ſervants. The work of the ſervants ſeemed to be a pleaſure to them, and, on the other hand, the members of every family ſeemed to vie with one another who ſhould treat their ſervants with the greateſt tenderneſs and humanity. Once or twice there was an attempt made to introduce overſeers and archoverſeers among them, from a neighbouring

neighbouring province which had retained theſe officers, tho' they would not ſuffer them to be ſubject to the Emperor. However, the people ſhowing a proper ſpirit, they were ſtill thrown out. All this time matters went on exceeding well; the fields were aſſiduouſly cultivated, and brought every year immenſe crops; and plenty as well as harmony was every where to be ſeen.

But alas, after a long ſeaſon of peace and quiet, things began to alter for the worſe. Ambition, avarice and luxury, would not be kept out by the baniſhment of the old titles. They found a way of introducing themſelves, under cover of the form that then prevailed, without any apparent change. The moſt important ſtep towards bringing this about, was re-eſtabliſhing the law which impowered great men to nominate Servants to inferior families. This was ſubmitted to the more eaſily, becauſe they only nominated them to the ſalary, provided that the corporation ſhould think proper to introduce them to the family. For this purpoſe, the moſt ſacred laws required an invitation from the family itſelf. But the young Servants ſoon began to find, that it was far eaſier for many of them to play the paraſite or ſycophant about great men's houſes, that they might procure a writ of nomination, than to acquire a good reputation for diligence in their work. That was the road, therefore, in which the greateſt part of them travelled to preferment.

Many and fierce were the ſtruggles, for ſeveral years, in the meetings of the corporation about introducing Servants to families. As all the laws required an invitation from the family, when any perſon was nominated, a neighbouring court would ſend a deputation to the family, to aſk them whether they would take ſuch a one for their Servant or not. Sometimes they wheedled and flattered, and ſometimes threatened them, if they would not comply. If any conſented, their names were ſet down three or four times, to ſwell the number; if any were angry and ſpoke impertinently, they were ſuppoſed to be out of their ſenſes, and incapable of judging. After theſe arts were uſed they would ſit down gravely to determine the matter, and FIND, that there was in this inſtance a moſt agreeable and harmonious invitation.

It is impoſſible to help ſmiling, when one reflects upon the various methods uſed in conducting this buſineſs. Sometimes they could not get a ſingle perſon in a houſe to accept of the Servant who had been nominated. When this happened, they uſed to ſend for all the relations of the family, even the moſt diſtant couſins, and aſk their conſent, which was eaſily obtained, becauſe it was nothing to them whether the family were well ſerved or ill. When they had obtained it, if a complaint was made, they endeavoured to prove by very ingenious reaſonings that theſe diſtant relations had as good a title to invite a Servant

Servant as any perſon whatever. Matters however drove on very heavily for a while; but in order to facilitate them, many gentlemen of eſtates, who knew not much either about ſervice or Servants, procured themſelves to be choſen to the office of helpers. Not that they helped to do any thing; but getting in to be members of the courts of the corporation, they contributed to provide Servants in places. By this means many were provided with a piece of bread, who had been poor ſneaking fellows, and had followed them in their youth, in hunting, fiſhing, and other diverſions.

Such was the ſituation of affairs when my informer went into the country, and as the caſe was very ſingular, the reader may eaſily gueſs how much it engaged his attention. He reſided chiefly in this Northern province, and, therefore, his remarks were moſtly confined to what happened among them. It would be endleſs to mention all that he told me, but the principal obſervations ſhall be communicated to the world in the following chapters.

CHAP. VI.

Of the great impropriety often ſeen in the appointment of Servants; and the ſentiments of the inhabitants on that ſubject.

THERE is commonly, in every ſociety, ſome radical principle which governs and modifies the reſt, and gives a tincture to all the meaſures that are carried on, whatever be their particular ſubject, or ſeeming intention. In the caſe before us, the fundamental error appears to have been the power of nomination which was given to great men. The conſequence of this was, an exceſſive impropriety in the appointment of Servants to different families. If a poor ordinary family wanted a houſhold Servant, ſometimes a Lord would ſend them a foreign cook out of his own kitchen. This fellow would ſpeak ſuch minced broken language, that they could not underſtand him; and the meat he dreſſed for them they could not endure to look upon. When they deſired him to provide plain ſolid food, ſuch as they had been in uſe to eat, and in ſufficient quantity to fill their bellies, he would ſerve them up a courſe of flimſy diſhes, finely garniſhed, but entirely diſguiſed, ſo that the poor people could not imagine what they contained. If at any time they made complaint of this, he triumphed over their

their clowniſh ignorance and unrefined taſte, and would offer to prove, to the ſatisfaction of all men of ſenſe, that he perfectly underſtood his art.

In innumerable ſuch inſtances they went intirely in the face of common ſenſe, in the choice and appointment of Servants. Sometimes, if a family wanted a plowman or a gardiner, they would ſend them a huntſman, or a running footman. If a conſiderable merchant wanted a book-keeper, they would ſend him a ſtupid ignorant fellow who could neither write nor read. For this prepoſterous conduct there was no remedy. The great men counted the right of nomination as a precious jewel, which no conſideration could induce them to part with. And as the power of determination, in all diſputed caſes, lay in courts compoſed of Servants, they ſtrenuouſly ſupported the moſt unreaſonable appointments. This was naturally to be expected, becauſe a contrary conduct would have been a ſilent impeachment of many of themſelves, as unfit for their preſent ſtations.

Beſides, it happened in this caſe, as I obſerved had happened in a former age, many loved to have it ſo. The people of better rank, and thoſe who would be thought to be of better rank by an unaccountable faſcination, not only approved but admired theſe meaſures. To allow families, they ſaid, to chooſe Servants for themſelves, would be a ſource of endleſs confuſion; but that the preſent was plainly a ſimple, rational, uniform and

method of proceeding. It was a common and fashionable topick of converſation to deſpiſe the folly and impudence of the common people, who had always a ſtrong inclination to chooſe their own Servants, and looked with a very evil eye upon thoſe who were thus billeted upon them againſt their wills. If any perſon, in a company, had but ſignified that he thought this conduct inconſiſtent with equity or good policy, he was not thought fit to be reaſoned with, but a great and loud laugh was immediately raiſed againſt him, ſo that he was not only put to ſilence, but to confuſion. Nay, there were not wanting many who affirmed, that no body could be ſincerely of that opinion, but that it was only pretended from baſe and ſiniſter views.

I muſt obſerve here, that when my informer was on this part of the ſubject, which indeed he often reſumed, as what had made a great impreſſion upon his own mind, I could not help again diſcovering marks of aſtoniſhment. I told him, I very well knew the abſurdities of which the human mind is capable, yet this ſeemed to be the moſt incredible of any thing that I had ever read or heard of; that it ſhould be laughed down as a ridiculous notion, that families ought to be at liberty to chooſe their own Servants. On this he was not a little offended, and ſpeaking with ſome acrimony, ſays, 'It was to gratify 'your curioſity, ſir, that, in this and former 'converſations, I have given an account of my 'obſer-

'observations in foreign countries. If you de-
'sire to hear no more, I shall be wholly silent;
'but give me leave to say, that the treatment
'which we travellers meet with when we return
'home, is at once unreasonable and ungrateful.
'If we tell you things that are common, you
'look upon them as insipid and trifling; and,
'if we tell you things that are quite new and
'surprising, you let us know, with great good
'manners, that you do not believe us.'

Then after a little pause, 'Pray sir,' says he, 'how many nations are there in Europe, Asia 'or Africa, who think themselves at liberty to 'choose their own prince, or to bring him to an 'account for oppression or bad government?' Truly, said I, I believe not above five or six. 'Well then,' says he, 'if, perhaps, fifty to one 'of mankind have thought it a sin or folly for 'them to choose their own masters, is it modest 'in you to suspect my veracity, when I tell you 'of one nation, where it became fashionable to 'think that they ought not to chuse their own 'Servants.'

'But, to come a little closer to the point,' says he; 'are you not a member of the select society in 'E——h?' I am, and glory in it as a most honourable distinction. 'Have you not taken 'agriculture under your patronage?' Undoubtedly; and by what means can we better promote the interest of the public? 'By none, I admit. 'But suffer me to proceed with my interroga-

'tories.

'tories. Have you bought any land with the 'profits of your improvements?' Not yet. They are but in their infancy, and have cost me a great deal of expence. 'Are the crops of im-'provers generally better than those of other 'people?' I cannot say they are. 'You ought,' says he, 'to have confessed that they are com-'monly worse; for, according to my observation, 'the mark of an improver is not to have a good 'crop, but to be able to give a rational and phi-'losophical account how he came to have a bad 'one. But have you not also encouraged a man 'to write books and read lectures upon agricul-'ture, who made himself a beggar by putting it 'in practice?' Perhaps it may be so, but he understood the theory. 'How came you to be-'lieve that he understood the theory? Alas! 'alas! sir, absurdities coming into fashion is not 'so rare a thing at home, as to entitle you to 'doubt the truth of my narrative, when I told 'you of the mistakes and delusion of a certain 'people abroad.'

I confess I was never more nettled at any thing, than at this unexpected attack upon the laudable attempts among us, of late, to improve our native country. To compare them with the monstrous conduct of the unpolished American people described in this book, was unsufferable. I could not, therefore, let the matter drop, but told him, All that you have said, sir, might easily be answered; however, not to spend time

upon

upon it at present, what do you think of, or what have you to say against the excellent and rational tracts which have been published by private gentlemen of fortune among us, upon agriculture? Do they not contain the clearest arithmetical calculations, of the profit to arise from the method laid down? 'I say,' answered he, 'they are all what the lawyers call felo, de se, 'and totally inadmissible.' Your reason pray. 'My reason! why, truly, I have more reasons 'than one. In the first place, they always put 'me in mind of a quack doctor with his catholicon. They have but one remedy for all diseases. A gentleman happens to be struck with 'some new theoretical principle, and immediately falls to work, ruins down every thing else, 'and applies this wonderful discovery to all purposes, all soils, and all seasons. You know what 'enthusiasts the horse hoers and pulverisers are. 'Many of them are clearly of opinion, that dung 'is prejudicial to ground, as serving only to engender weeds. I was once quite of this opinion myself, and found no other difficulty in it, 'than how gentlemen and farmers would get 'quit of their dung, which, not being returned 'to the ground in the way of manure, must soon 'grow up to an enormous and at the same time, 'most nauseous and offensive heap. When under these apprehensions, I remember to have 'projected a scheme to be carried on by subscription, which would have proved an effectual re-

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'medy. The method was, to have plans taken 'of every county, in which the level ſhould be 'marked, then canals to be carried through all 'the low grounds, and ſmaller ducts drawn from 'every gentleman and farmer's houſe, terminat-'ing in theſe canals, which, by the help of a 'collection of rain water at every houſe, would, 'at certain ſeaſons of the year, carry away the 'whole dung, and at laſt empty it into the ſea. 'The expence of this ſcheme would, indeed, 'have been very conſiderable; but the great ad-'vantages to be reaped from it, I apprehended, 'would ſoon convince every body of its utility. 'Now, however ridiculous ſuch a ſcheme may 'be, I am fully convinced it would have been 'put in practice in a certain county, if it had not 'been for the incorrigible obſtinacy of the com-'mon people. I am alſo of opinion, that it 'would have ſucceeded, and that dung would 'have been wholly baniſhed in a ſhort time. 'This would have happened, not only by the 'help of the canals, but the crops would have 'been ſo thin and ſpiritual, that the cattle who 'fed upon them would have paſſed very little of 'a groſs or excremental nature.

'I ſhall not trouble you, continued he, at this 'time, with any more of my reaſons but one. It 'ſeems highly incredible that, if the new ſchemes 'of agriculture were ſo profitable as their authors 'give out, they would be ſo generous as to diſ-'cover them gratis to the publick, and even

'preſs

'preſs the ſaid publick to accept of them. It is 'more probable they would keep them as a ſe-'cret in their own families, till their excellence 'were diſcovered by their viſible effects. I 'know a manufacturing town, where, if any man 'falls upon a method of working, or a fabrick 'of goods, that is likely to bring a good profit, 'he is ſo far from preſſing it upon his neigh-'bours, that he uſes every poſſible precaution to 'keep it to himſelf. On the other hand, his 'neighbours are as inquiſitive as he is ſecret; and 'commonly both diſcover and imitate it in a 'very little time. There is a diſpoſition in man-'kind to reſiſt what is forced upon them, and to 'leave no method uneſſayed to come at what is 'induſtriouſly placed out of their reach.

'I would, therefore, humbly recommend it 'to all improvers, to give over talking upon the 'ſubject, and to fall heartily about putting their 'rules in practice; and, I can promiſe them, 'that, if they be ſucceſsful, it will not be long 'before they will be quite common. Or, let 'every perſon who diſcovers a noſtrum in agri-'culture, apply to the government for a patent 'that no body may be ſuffered to uſe it except 'himſelf, and thoſe who ſhall pay him ſufficient-'ly for the ingenuity of his invention. I can aſ-'ſure you, ſir, that if I had ſaid to the people 'whom I left a few years ago, that I knew a 'nation, where it was common for benevolent 'perſons to point out to them plain, eaſy, cheap

'and

'and certain methods of growing rich, but they 'would not be perſuaded to uſe them, I would 'have had the ſame compliment paid me, which 'you were pleaſed to pay me ſome time ago, that 'I was taking the privilege of a traveller.'

I ſhall not trouble the reader with ſaying how far I was convinced by this reaſoning, only it made me reſolve to be entirely ſilent, as to any further particulars I ſhould learn concerning the corporation of Servants, how ſtrange and unaccountable ſoever they might be. Having, therefore, brought this unavoidable digreſſion to a cloſe, we proceed with the hiſtory.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Great partiality in the trial of Servants, and uncertainty in the characters given of them.

IF the reader recollects what was ſaid in the preceding chapter, it is probable he will be ſurpriſed, that the corporation, with the powers given them, did not, for their own credit, look better into the qualifications of Servants. Since it was in their power to licenſe them or not, it may be ſuppoſed they would take effectual care, that no inſufficient perſon ſhould be admitted. But it is to be obſerved, that ſo ſoon as the method of fixing Servants, upon the nomination of Lords or great men, came to be again in uſe, the trial of their ſufficiency turned to a mere farce. There might be ſome degree of integrity found in one court; but, in ſuch a caſe, the candidate had nothing to do but apply to another, where he would find, perhaps, a ſet of raſcally fellows who were aſhamed of nothing. To what a degree of boldneſs they ventured to proceed, may be ſeen from the following account of what literally happened.

A certain court was going upon the examination of a young man, who deſired to have a certificate that he was fully accompliſhed as a Servant, and particularly well ſkilled in the cultiva-

tion of land. A grave and antient member aſked him, Pray, ſir, what is the beſt way of plowing hard ſtiff land? *Anſ.* By running a wheel-barrow over it. The examinator was highly offended with the abſurdity of the anſwer, and ſhewed plainly in his countenance a mixture of ſurprize and indignation. But another member of court, being of a meek and gentle temper, and a great enemy to ſeverity, thought proper to interpoſe. He ſays to his brother, my dear ſir, the young man is modeſt and baſhful, which in itſelf is a moſt amiable diſpoſition, tho' it hinders him from anſwering ſo diſtinctly, as were to be wiſhed. Then, turning to the candidate, he ſays, I dare ſay, ſir, you know well enough that a wheel-barrow cannot plow land, becauſe it will not enter into the ſoil, nor open it ſufficiently. Muſt not hard ſtiff land be broken and pulveriſed, in order to make it fruitful? *Anſ.* Yes, ſir.

Then the firſt reſumed his examination. Now, pray ſir, Can you tell me how deep land ought to be plowed when it is well done? He, tho' quite ignorant of the ſubject, being naturally a man of mettle and acuteneſs, imagined, from what he had heard, that the deeper the better, and immediately anſwered, ſix yards. On this his examinator fell into a violent paſſion, and ſaid, How have you the impudence, ſir, to aſk us to inſtruct you as a plowman, when you know nothing of the matter? Was there ever ſuch a thing heard or ſeen, ſince the beginning of the world, as

plowing

plowing land fix yards deep? Or what conception could you have, in your own mind, of the poſſibility of the thing? You ought to have a ſentence paſſed againſt you, wholly incapacitating you for any place in this country.

The noble and generous ſpirit of the candidate was rouſed by this ſevere treatment, ſo, he replied; Pray ſir, do you imagine that, in this improved age, the ſervants of the eſtabliſhed corporation are brought up to a thorough knowledge of the ſeveral branches of buſineſs, for which the ſalaries are appointed? For my own particular, you ought not to be ſurprized that I could not tell you how land ſhould be plowed, for I never ſaw a plough in my life. How, when, where and by whom were you educated then? ſays the other in amaze. *Anſ.* I ſerved an apprenticeſhip in a toy ſhop. Very well, ſays the examinator, bleſſed, precious, happy, improved times! I have no more to add, I give up the examination to any body that pleaſes.

When this diſcontented zealot had dropt the diſcourſe, ſome other moderate men aſked him a few polite and faſhionable queſtions, ſuch as, what is the genteeleſt lining for a red coat? In what manner ſhould you preſent a glaſs of wine to a lord, and how to a farmer? Whether is hunting or fiſhing the pleaſanteſt diverſion? Whether ſhould the Servants or the children of a family have the beſt lodging, diet. &c.? After a few minutes had been ſpent in this manner, it

was carried by a great majority that he had answered extremely well, and was, in every respect, a most accomplished Servant.

It was usual for the Servants to carry certificates with them, from the inferior courts of the corporation, wherever they went; but if any man had trusted to these certificates, he would have found himself miserably mistaken. They had taken up a principle, that a man might attest any thing to be true, which he did not know to be false. On this principle, for a proper consideration, a vagrant fellow, of whom they knew little or nothing, would easily obtain a certificate, declaring him to be a compleat Servant for every branch of business, and in particular, an admirable cook, gardiner, or whatever else he himself desired to be specified. If, upon trial, he was found totally deficient in any of the branches mentioned, and complaint was made to the court who certified for him, they thought they were fully excused if they could say that, upon their honour, they knew nothing about him, and were wholly ignorant whether he was a good Servant or a bad. On all such occasions they used to launch out in praise of charity, and alledge, that every man had a right to another's good word, as far as it would go, unless he had forfeited it by some particular and known misdemeanor.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Servants of different characters. A ſketch of the good and bad. The inveterate hatred of the bad againſt the good.

HOWEVER general the corruption was, the reader is not to imagine that all Servants were of the ſame character, or behaved in the ſame manner. There were ſtill ſome, here and there, who acted in a manner ſuitable to their ſtation, who minded their buſineſs, who loved their maſters, and were beloved by them. Theſe made as great a ſtruggle as they could to keep matters right in the meetings of the corporation, tho', commonly, with very indifferent ſucceſs. The oppoſite principles and conduct of the two ſorts may be learned from the following particulars.

They differed, *toto cælo*, in their very profeſſion and manner of ſpeaking. The modern faſhionable party affirmed, that courage and ſelf-ſufficiency ought to be the leading character of a Servant. That he ought always to be ſpeaking in praiſe of his own deeds. That he ought never to allow of any error or miſtake in his behaviour: but, on the contrary, to inſiſt that he deſerved the higheſt approbation. Who is obliged, ſaid they, to ſpeak well of a man who

ſpeaks ill of himſelf? Can there be any thing more puſillanimous, than for a ſervant to be always confeſſing that he can do very little to any purpoſe.

On the other hand, the honeſter ſort of Servants declared, that they thought pride and confidence were in themſelves hateful, and quite intolerable in Servants. That they ſhould not make high pretenſions, leſt they ſhould be brought but to the greater ſhame; that they ſhould acknowledge the great imperfection of every thing they did, and expect to be rewarded, not for the worth or value of their ſervice, but from the goodneſs and indulgence of their maſters.

It was curious to obſerve the different effects of theſe principles. Thoſe who ſpoke in the higheſt terms of their own qualifications were always the moſt negligent and the moſt unfaithful. They grudged every thing they did, and laid hold of innumerable pretences for ſhortening their hours of labour, and procuring days of relaxation. If, at any time, one of them had done a piece of work in a tolerable manner he could hardly be brought to do any more for two days; but was wholly taken up in admiring his own ingenuity, and commending it to all who would take the pains to liſten to him. On the contrary, the humble and ſelf-denied were always buſy, applied themſelves to their duty with the utmoſt care and aſſiduity, and thought they could never do enough. They never once called in queſtion the

the hours of labour, but conſidered the neceſſity of the family, or the importance of the work they were engaged in. When any body happened to commend one of them for his diligence, he intreated them to forbear ſuch diſcourſe, for he was very ſenſible he had not done the thouſandth part of what he ought to have done.

Men came to be ſo ſenſible of the different effects of theſe principles, that almoſt every family earneſtly wiſhed to have Servants of the ſelf-denying character, and perfectly hated the other. If they entered into converſation with an unknown Servant, they were particularly attentive to the ſtrain of his diſcourſe, and, though he were upon his guard, would with great ſagacity penetrate his ſentiments. But, alas! this ſerved very little purpoſe; for, if he had intereſt to procure a writ of nomination, they were obliged to receive him, and then being fixed in the ſaddle, he made a full diſcovery both of his principles and practice.

Nothing was more remarkable than the rancorous hatred which the ſelf-ſufficient bore to the humble Servants; eſpecially ſuch as ſhowed the moſt remarkable diligence in their work. They ſpread ſlanders againſt them without number. They uſed to go about with indefatigable diligence, among the great men, and nominators to the eſtabliſhed ſalaries, to exaſperate their minds againſt them, and prevent their ſettlement or promotion. They repreſented them as a ſet of poor, ſilly, ſneaking, ſpiritleſs fellows, who, for

no

no other end than to throw an odium on the more free and generous livers, would work longer than uſual. For the ſame reaſon, it was pretended, that, when the reſt were at their paſtime running, jumping, or cudgel playing, then to be ſure, theſe hypocrites would be driving a ſtake; or pruning a tree about a farm, or picking weeds from a garden or field of corn. They repreſented them, alſo, (which was indeed partly true,) as acquiring a ſtiff ruſtick air, by often ſtooping, and habitual application to their work.

Neither were they wanting in executing their revenge againſt their enemies themſelves, whenever an opportunity offered. If two or three of the looſer ſort met, by chance, one of the induſtrious in a ſolitary place, or going of an errand; they cunningly ſolicited him to join with them in ſome diverſion, for example, blind man's-buff, or any other. If he complied, they all conſpired againſt him, and drubbed him heartily; and, after they had done ſo, one was immediately diſpatched to inform againſt him and let the family he belonged to know how he had been ſpending his time, ſo that he was no better than his neighbours. Whenever they diſcovered a Servant in a field after the uſual time of labour, they would get behind the hedges and pelt him unmercifully with ſtones, ſo that he returned home, not only fatigued with his work, but ſeverely ſmarting with the wounds he had received.

Such

Such was not only the conduct of individuals, but the very same spirit prevailed in the meetings of the corporation, from the lowest to the highest. None met with so severe treatment from them as honest industrious servants, who were beloved in the families where they were placed; neither was there any crime so heinous, as being more diligent than the generality of other servants. If any family accused a servant of pilfering, negligence, drunkenness, or wantonness among the maids, these were all human infirmities, no way atrocious in their nature. They were also hard to be ascertained; so that it was almost impossible to bring a proof of the facts to the satisfaction of the court. But, if one happened to be accused of doing any uncommon service to the family at their desire, or working when others were allowed to play, this was high treason against the constitution; and he was condemned without mercy, and sometimes without hearing.

But, of all the crimes of this sort, the most unpardonable was whatever tended to impeach the wisdom, or weaken the authority of the annual meetings of the corporation. When an inferior court was ordered to introduce a servant into a family who had refused to receive him, sometimes a member or two would humbly represent, that the terms of the oath appeared to them absurd and profane, in that instance, and beg to be excused. Whenever this happened, they

they were dragged as delinquents to the bar, rated and abuſed, ſtript and branded, declared infamous, and incapable even of repentance. It was many times affirmed in the general meeting, that no man could be guilty of a crime which ſo much as approached in guilt to that of diſparaging the authority of the corporation of Servants.

I muſt take this opportunity of acquainting the reader with a ſtory that happened a few years before my informer left the country. One of the Servants, who was a great oppoſer of the prevailing meaſures, finding his brethren to be deaf to ſerious reaſoning, fell upon a ſingular device. Being poſſeſt of a vein of humour, and knowing a little of the art of painting, he drew a picture of the droll or ludicrous kind, in which, by ænigmatical characters, he repreſented the various impoſitions of the Servants in general. He alſo took off the likeneſſes of the principal and moſt active leaders of the corporation, and put them in the moſt comical poſtures imaginable. Here was to be ſeen a fellow capering and dancing in a garden all full of weeds, and his inſtruments lying beſide him, quite grown over with ruſt—Another carrying a baſket over his arm, with the ſign of a pine apple in his hand, and a paſſenger, on examining the contents, finds nothing but ſtinking fiſh, and ſtops his noſe—A great bloated fellow, ſwelled like a tun, challenging the whole country to run a race with him—Another hurrying away a girl into a corner, and covering her with

his

his frock.—Theſe, and many others, he drew in ſuch a manner, as clearly to expoſe their knavery and oſtentation.

This picture was ſtuck up, in the night-time, near a publick road leading to a great town. As the perſons were all very well known, it is not to be imagined what entertainment it afforded to the people. No body could look upon it without laughing: and, when ever any of the Servants, honoured with a place in it, were ſeen upon the ſtreets, the boys gathered about them in crowds, and, to their unſpeakable mortification, mimicked the poſtures in which they had been repreſented. Copies in miniature were taken of this performance, and kept in many families: ſo that, whenever the Servants were in ill humour they would pull out the draught, and hold it in their eye.

The fury and reſentment of the Servants, on the publication of this piece, is not to be conceived. The author had done it with ſo much caution and ſecrecy, that they could not get him legally convicted. However, they either diſcovered, or at leaſt thought they had diſcovered, who he was, and employed themſelves night and day, in deviſing methods of revenge. Above all, that unlucky fellow, who had been repreſented following the girl, was ſo tranſported with rage, that he ſcarce ever returned to his right ſenſes. He had been ſomething of a draughtſman himſelf, ſo he ſet about making a picture in ridicule of the induſ-

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trious ſervants; but, either the thing itſelf was ſo difficult, or he proceeded with ſo much rage and trepidation, that it was a perfect caricatura, and his friends prevailed with him to ſuppreſs it.

The poor author, in the mean time, was obliged to be conſtantly upon his guard, as there was always a ſet of deſperadoes lying in wait for him, armed with clubs, and fully determined to beat his brains out, if they could catch him in a proper place. In the mean time, they all agreed in telling lies upon him without ceaſing. They affirmed, that no body but a complete raſcal could be capable of ſuch a performance; that to betray Servants to their maſters was, at any rate, a malicious trick; but, that for a Servant to laugh at his fellow Servants, and ſet other people a laughing at them too, was the cleareſt demonſtration of a depraved heart. It was ten years after the fact was committed, that my informer left the country; and he declared that their reſentment had not abated in the leaſt degree: a circumſtance which I obſerved, had made a deep impreſſion upon his mind; ſo that he would often ſay, From the fury of an enraged Servant, good Lord deliver me. He alſo told me, that he was convinced by this example, that wit and humour was a talent unſpeakably prejudicial to the poſſeſſor; and therefore, if ever he had a child, and obſerved in him the leaſt turn that way, he would apply himſelf with the utmoſt aſſiduity to eradicate it as a vice.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The careleſſneſs of Servants in their work. A curious debate in a certain family, which iſſued in nothing.

IT will be eaſily perceived, from what has been ſaid above, that the greateſt part of the Servants were exceſſively negligent. They ſeemed to have two great objects conſtantly in view, and to carry them on hand in hand; the increaſe of their wages, and the diminution of their labour. The truth is, however ſtrange it may ſeem, theſe always bore an exact proportion to one another. Whenever a Servant got more wages ſettled upon him, he looked upon it as a conſequence, that he ſhould be more ſlothful than before. In the mean time, it was remarkable what ingenious and plauſible reaſonings they always fell upon to juſtify their conduct. On this ſubject particularly they would ſay, 'What is well done is ſoon done. A ſmall piece of work, executed as it ought to be, is better than marring a great deal, which is worſe than idleneſs.'

Inſtead of any other general remarks, I ſhall entertain the reader with a curious example of their ingenuity, in deviſing excuſes for their own neglect. This happened in the family of a great man, about three years after the publication of

the ænigmatical picture, and plainly ſhowed that tho' the reproof had enraged them, it had contributed nothing to reform them. One morning, almoſt the whole Servants of this family were gathered together in a large hall, to conſider what work it would be proper for them to fall about that day. A Servant who, indeed, was not very well looked upon, as inclining a little to the ſober induſtrious kind, complained, that there had been for a long time an intolerable negligence in keeping the fences, and excluding ſtraying or ſtrange cattle from their maſter's grounds. He therefore propoſed, that they ſhould immediately go in a body, drive out all the ſtrange cattle, without exception, that were in the incloſures, and mend up the fences, which were now in ſo ſorry a condition. He told them, that there were many ſtrange cattle paſturing where they ought not to be; particularly, that he himſelf, not an hour before, had ſeen a large bull, with a thick neck, and dull heavy eyes, but broad ſhoulders, firm joints, and a lank belly, which made him fit for jumping. On this a diſpute aroſe, of which the reader may take the following juſt and faithful account.

One obſerved, that he could not agree to the motion, which proceeded from a perſon no way remarkable for a good temper. 'If our brother 'would look a little more at home, ſays he, perhaps he would find leſs reaſon for theſe ſnarling 'complaints for the negligence of others. The

'propoſal

propoſal is unkind and unbenevolent. There ſhould be great forbearence uſed in every family toward their neighbours. No doubt there have been, and there will be, treſpaſſes upon both ſides; and therefore I am humbly of opinion, that no notice ſhould be taken of it at all.

A ſecond then riſes up, and ſpeaks to the following effect. If I thought that any good would follow upon what is now propoſed, I ſhould readily agree to it. I am perhaps as much attached to my maſter's intereſt as the perſon who made this motion, notwithſtanding all his fine profeſſions; but I am perſuaded it would be altogether in vain. There is a ſtrange diſpoſition in beaſts of all kinds, to break into thoſe places from which there is any attempt to keep them out; it would therefore only increaſe the evil it pretends to remedy. All perſecution, we know, helps the cauſe of the perſecuted; ſo that ſuppoſing one has made an encroachment at this time, if he were driven out, we may depend upon it, he would immediately return with twenty more at his heels.

A third made a very ſage and learned obſervation. Take notice, ſays he, what you are about to do. There is more difficulty in it than you apprehend. Is there not a very great ſimilarity in colour, ſhape and ſize, between our maſter's cattle and his neighbour's? It would oblige us to

a very ſtrict and particular examination before we could determine the point. This would create ſuch difference of opinion, ſuch zeal and keenneſs in every one to ſupport his own ſentiments, that we might ſpend the whole time of our ſervice before we could come to any concluſion. I acknowledge it is a fixed principle, that every beaſt ſhould be kept only on his own maſter's grounds; but, I hope you will be ſenſible, it is only a ſpeculative point which beaſt belongs to one maſter, and which to another. On this ſubject, wife and good ſervants have differed in all ages, and will differ to the end of the world.

A fourth delivered the following opinion. I cannot help being againſt the motion, for a reaſon that no body has yet taken notice of. I can aſſure you, from my certain knowledge, it would give great pleaſure to the ſtrange cattle themſelves, and, in particular to the bull who ſeems to have given occaſion to the preſent debate. He has a vaſt ſatisfaction in being gazed upon and wondered at, which would be the certain conſequence of this attempt. Beſides, he is infected with an inveterate itch, which gives him an infinite pleaſure in being driven through the gaps of hedges, and being ſcrubbed and clawed by the thorns in the paſſage.

A fifth ſaid, 'I am ſurprized to ſee ſo much time ſpent upon this ridiculous propoſal. The author of it ſeems to have forgot a fundamental

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'law of the Corporation, that no Servant ſhould 'meddle with the affairs of another family, or 'pretend to take the inſpection or government 'of any beaſts but ſuch as belong to his own 'maſter. Now, ſays he, this is manifeſtly the 'caſe in the preſent inſtance; nay, it is even 'implied in the propoſal itſelf, which is, there-'fore, quite irregular and incompetent. If that 'bull does not belong to us, let his own maſter 'ſend for him when he pleaſes; we have noth-'ing to do with him. Let us mind our own 'affairs.'

Then roſe a ſervant of ancient ſtanding, ſeveral of his teeth having been loſt by old age, who bore a particular mark of his maſter's favour. He was remarkable for making long ſpeeches, of which it was difficult to comprehend the meaning. After ſpeaking about half an hour, quite unintelligibly, he concluded thus. 'Brethren, 'I do not deny, that ſuch a propoſal as this 'might have done very well in former times, 'when the fences were almoſt entire, and the 'offending ſtrangers very few: but, at preſent, 'it is quite romantick and impoſſible. Will any 'man ſeriouſly pretend, at this time of day, when 'the hedges are almoſt wholly broken down, and 'ſo many encroachments on every hand, to af-'firm, that none ought to continue in the in-'cloſures but ſuch as truly belong to our maſter. 'I am afraid his fields would make a very de-

'solate appearance, for there would be few left 'behind.'

Last of all, one tells them in a few words, that the debate was altogether idle; that there was a mistake at the very bottom of the affair: for, by the best information he could procure, the beast in question was not a bull, but an ox.

To sum up the matter, one or other of these various and contradictory reasons prevailed upon a great majority to come to this resolution, that it was not prudent nor expedient, at this time, to agree to the proposal; and, therefore, the intruders in general should be winked at, and that beast in particular, whether he were bull or ox, should continue where he was.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Of the ambition and covetouſneſs of the Servants, and the various methods they fell upon to gratify their deſires.

I HAVE obſerved before, that the conſtitution in this province was framed with great care, and ſeemed particularly calculated to prevent ambition and love of pre-eminence. For this reaſon, they eſtabliſhed a parity among the Servants, and took every meaſure they could think of, to prevent the introduction of overſeers and archoverſeers. By this time, however, the Servants had not only degenerated in point of fidelity and diligence, but had made great encroachments upon the conſtitution itſelf. They had a prodigious hankering after the high-ſounding titles, and immenſe revenues, which were given to Servants in the neighbouring province. It grieved them to hear, and ſometimes, when ſent upon buſineſs to that country, to ſee, that ſome of the overſeers lived in ſplendid palaces, and were carried about in chariots, while they themſelves were ſtill obliged to wear the dreſs of Servants, and generally to walk a-foot.

Gladly would they have introduced theſe offices in their own province; but the great men, who had hitherto aſſiſted them, dreaded the expence, and

and would not agree to it. They were, therefore, obliged to proceed cautiously and gradually. In some few instances, they made it appear, that one Servant might be introduced in two different families, and enjoy both the salaries. As to the work, they might be sometimes in the one, and sometimes in the other; or, if one of them was a family of small consequence, they might do well enough without any Servant at all. They begged, in the most abject manner, of the governor of the province, that a small number of salaries might be appointed, without any office annexed to them, by way of gratuities, for the encouragement of good Servants. This was done; and there followed a terrible competition for obtaining them, which produced a most malignant hatred between those who were successful and those who were not.

The reader may perhaps imagine, that the hope of meriting these salaries would excite them to vie with one another, in doing the business of the families where they served. It was quit the contrary. They tried every method of advancement but that only; or, if any did try it in that way, they were sure to be disappointed. Some of them used the old way of flattery, which had always a very great effect. Some became political tools, spies, and informers to the prevailing party at court. Some were not ashamed to become pimps and pandars to great men, and even sometimes to attend them in their nocturnal expeditions.

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Some endeavoured to make themselves remarkable for feats and achievements quite out of the way of their own business. One of them, for example, should make a windmill of curious structure, and put it upon the top of the house where he lived. The consequence of this was, that passengers would go that way, after standing still and admiring a little, would ask any person they met, who had done it. The answer immediately followed, 'The servant who lives 'here, is a most ingenious fellow, as ever was 'seen.' Thus was his fame spread abroad, and sometimes came to the ears of the people above.

I cannot help particularly mentioning one who was the most successful of all that had gone before him, who was alive when my informer left the country, and probably may be alive at this very time. The method he fell upon, was telling wonderful stories of the heroic actions of that people's predecessors, a subject of which they were extravagantly fond. He had acquired a very great knack of story-telling, and could describe things to the life, both by word and gesture, that every body was delighted to hear him. He immediately gave over all work in the family to which he belonged; and when they civilly put him in mind of his neglect, he told them they might go about their business, for they were a pack of seditious scoundrels, altogether below his notice. He was a fellow of uncommon ability, and no less remarkable for enterprise and resolution,

reſolution. He carried on his ſchemes; procured for himſelf one ſalary after another; and did not fail to laugh at the ſimplicity of thoſe who beſtowed them, ſaying among his intimate companions, 'He bleſſed God that mankind were ſo 'eaſily deceived, by the formal countenance of a 'Servant.'

The ſupernumerary ſalaries, however, were ſo few, that they were ſoon exhauſted, and did little elſe, indeed, than excite a hungering and thirſting after more. To remedy this, they fell upon a method of gratifying the vanity of thoſe whoſe pockets they could not fill. A title was invented, which, (like the honorary rewards of the ancients in this part of the world) they ſaid, would ſerve to diſtinguiſh illuſtrious merit, and raiſe a happy emulation. The title was, Maſter of Service; and the directors of the ſchools or places of exerciſe were appointed to beſtow it, according to the ſkill and proficiency, of the candidates. Immediately applications came in from all quarters, and it was dealt about very liberally, and, if poſſible, even more abſurdly than the ſalaries had been before. There was hardly an inſtance of its being beſtowed for real knowledge or uſeful induſtry: but for ſome whimſical qualification of a different kind. If a man had invented a new dance or ſong, or collected a whole barrel of ſalted butterflies in one ſummer, or made a gold chain for binding a flea to a poſt, he was inſtantly created a Maſter of Service.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the ſentiments of the people concerning the Servants and their manner of treating them.

THE reader may probably be wondering in himſelf, how the people behaved in theſe circumſtances, and what became of their affairs. He may be ready to think, that their patience muſt be by this time nearly exhauſted, and ſome terrible revolution at hand. The truth is, the patience of many of them had been at an end for many years; but, being divided among themſelves, their influence was not ſufficient to produce a general change. It is impoſſible to mention all the effects which the conduct of the Servants had upon the people; but it will be worth while to take particular notice of two claſſes of men, and their behaviour upon the ſubject.

One ſet of people roſe among them, whoſe ſentiments and conduct were as ſingular and extraordinary, as any thing recorded in this book. They were men who made high pretenſions to reaſon and penetration, and gave themſelves much to abſtract reflections upon the nature of things. They were of opinion, that all the wiſdom of the nation centered in themſelves, and that all the reſt were downright fools or madmen. However, entering upon their ſpeculations with ſuch

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an overweening conceit of themselves, their boasted reason first led them into many mistakes, and at last fairly turned their heads.

It was their custom to search into history, and particularly into the history of the Servants. There they found, that, in every age, there had been a great deal of knavery among the Servants. All the instances of this sort they used to collect, publish, and compare with the conduct of the Servants in their own times; which they exposed with the greatest severity. At last, by long dwelling upon this subject, they came to be of opinion, that there ought to be no such thing in nature as a Servant; that they never had done any thing but harm; and that the world would be much better without them. Sometimes sober-minded people attempted to set them to rights, and alledged, that, tho' the dishonest had always been too numerous as well as noisy, yet still there were some of great worth and usefulness; nay, that society, in the nature of things, could not subsist without persons in lower stations, to serve and accommodate those in higher. This was so far from having an effect upon them, that they became always more positive upon contradiction, and scarce ever failed to advance opinions still more wild and romantic than before. Instead of yielding that Servants were necessary in society, they affirmed, that it was not only desirable, but extremely possible, to have a whole

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nation of lords, without one perſon among them of inferior degree.

They affirmed, that excepting Servants, all other men were by nature wiſe, honeſt, and active; fully ſufficient for their own happineſs; and that they would have been quite virtuous and happy, without any exception, if they had not been blindfolded and deceived by the Servants. To this race, whom they uſed often in a fit of raving, to curſe in a moſt dreadful manner, they imputed all the envy, malice, oppreſſion, covetouſneſs, fraud, rapine, and bloodſhed that ever had happened ſince the beginning of the world. In ſupport of their ſcheme, they made learned diſquiſitions on nature, and the firſt cauſe of all things. They ſhewed that nature was, and muſt be wiſe and good in all her productions; and, therefore, that man muſt needs be free from every thing that is evil, and his original conſtitution perfectly juſt and ſound. All the diſorders that were to be ſeen in ſociety were eaſily accounted for, from the helliſh machinations of the Servants. In the mean time, it was obvious, that the Servants were the product of nature too; and according to the ſame reaſoning, muſt have been of as gentle and tractable diſpoſitions, and in all reſpects as faultleſs as their maſters. This manifeſt difficulty in their own ſcheme, however unaccountable it may appear, they never once reflected upon, nor by conſequence attempted to reſolve.

Sometimes they were preſſed with the neceſſity of Servants to cultivate the ground, which, if neglected, it was plain, would grow over with briars and thorns, and every noxious weed. Here they immediately recurred to their old argument, the excellency of nature's productions; and, upon the ſtrength of it, preſumed abſolutely to deny the fact. They ſaid, were the earth only left to itſelf, it would produce nothing but what was uſeful and ſalutary, and that in great abundance, for the ſupport of its inhabitants; that all the pretended cultivation of it by the Servants was but ſpoiling it; and that they themſelves had ſowed the ſeeds of every hurtful or unneceſſary plant. It was to no purpoſe to mention to them, either the vaſt tracts of uncultivated ground, or the deſolate condition of a neglected field; all this, they pretended, aroſe from a certain ſympathy in the ſeveral parts of the earth one with another, and from poiſonous vapours eaſily carried by the wind, from the places where Servants had been at work. In ſhort, they ſometimes projected a ſcheme for a new ſettlement where no Servants ſhould be admitted; and where they hoped, in a little time, every man would be as wiſe as a philoſopher, as rich as a merchant, and as magnificent as a king.

After all, the perfection of their abſurdity appeared in the following circumſtance. Though it was plain, to any perſon of reflexion, that their delirium took its riſe from the tricks and miſbehaviour

haviour of bad Servants, yet they had the moſt rooted and inveterate antipathy at thoſe that were good. The reaſon, probably was, that the diligence and uſefulneſs of this laſt ſort ſtood directly in the way of their ſcheme, and prevented the reſt of the nation from being of their opinion. All ſeemingly good Servants they affirmed to be at bottom arrant knaves; and in one reſpect, unſpeakably worſe than any of the reſt, becauſe they appeared to be better. The idle, ſlothful, worthleſs Servants, were frequently their companions; and it was one of their higheſt entertainments to lead ſuch fellows into frolicks, miſchief, or debauchery, and then point them out to their fellow citizens, and uſe words to this purpoſe; 'You poor hood-winked fools, do you 'ſee theſe raſcals? why will you any longer har-'bour them in your houſes? they are all of one 'complexion, and will infallibly bring you to mi-'ſery and ſpeedy deſtruction.'

CHAP. XII.

Continuation of the ſame ſubject. The ſentiments and conduct of others, in conſequence of the behaviour of the Servants.

WE are not to ſuppoſe that the whole nation loſt their ſenſes. No: by far the greater number acted as prudently and rationally as men could do in their circumſtances. According to plain common ſenſe, in proportion as corruption and degeneracy increaſed among the Servants, they ſet the higher value on ſuch as were honeſt and faithful. They uſed every mean in their power to procure ſuch for their own families, agreeably to the laws of the corporation. When this could not be brought about, or when a good-for-nothing-fellow was buckled to the ſalary, they put themſelves to the additional expence of hiring one according to their own mind; paid the former his wages duly, and only deſired the favour of him to give them no trouble, but ſpend his time according to his own fancy.

It was pleaſant enough to obſerve the different conduct of the eſtabliſhed Servants, according to their different tempers, when they fell under this predicament. Some of them were greatly enraged to ſee the ſervice of another preferred to theirs, uſed many artful methods to prevent it where

where they could, and took every opportunity of venting their malice, or glutting their revenge when they could not. Where they could get any body to believe them, they aſſerted that all ſkill and power of doing good was confined to the corporation; that it was inherent in them, and deſcended in their blood from one generation to another, like courage in the race of game cocks. The others, they pretended, were a ſpurious brood, and that it was impoſſible to train them ſo as to make them fit for ſervice.

If this did not gain credit, all poſſible pains were taken to diſparage the conduct of the additional Servants. Their work was examined with the greateſt ſtrictneſs, every flaw in it pointed out, and many faults imputed to it merely through envy. If any piece of work appeared to be ſubſtantial, they pretended it wanted neatneſs, and was altogether inelegant. This charge, however, made little impreſſion upon the people. They had been ſo long plagued with Servants who minded nothing but ornament, both in their perſons and their work, that they were rather pleaſed than diſguſted with one of a more homely carriage.

When nothing elſe would do, the groſſeſt lies and calumnies were ſpread, both of the new Servants and thoſe who employed them. It was pretended, that they ſowed the ſeeds of ſedition and diſaffection, in the families where they got admittance. Sometimes this accuſation, tho' utterly groundleſs, obtained ſuch credit with the governors

governors, that, if they had a complaint to make, or a cauſe to try, they could ſcarcely expect juſtice. It was alſo alledged, that they terrified the children out of their wits, by telling frightful ſtories in the winter evenings. You might meet with many of the eſtabliſhed Servants who aſſerted, and even ſeemed to believe, that all who employed any other than themſelves, were idiots or crack-brained, and deſtitute of common ſenſe.

On the other hand, not a few of the eſtabliſhed Servants were altogether indifferent how many others were hired, and how little work was left to themſelves. They knew that their wages were well ſecured to them, which was the main chance; and they found rather more time and liberty to follow the bent of their inclinations. Perhaps they would have been better ſatisfied if the people had been content with what kind and quality of work they thought proper to do. But, as this was not to be expected, the hiring of others rendered all matters perfectly eaſy, and their lives were one continued ſcene of indolence or pleaſure.

In the mean time, it was highly diverting to hear how they expreſſed themſelves upon this ſubject, and with how much art and cunning they made a virtue of neceſſity. They uſed to extol their own candour and benevolence. 'Gentle-'men,' one of them would ſay, 'you ſee with 'what diſcretion I uſe you. I am always glad 'to ſee liberty prevail, and every man ſuffered to

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'do what ſeems proper to himſelf. I am well 'pleaſed, that you ſhould hire as many Servants 'as you incline. I aſk no more, than that I 'may have a clean neat bed-chamber, in a con-'venient part of the houſe, my wages well and 'regularly paid, and a ſmall bit of ground in 'the garden to bring up a few delicious herbs 'and fruits for my own uſe. If theſe things are 'properly attended to, you ſhall find me a good 'man to live with; I ſhall never interfere with 'your work in the leaſt, or give you any manner 'of trouble, even by making remarks upon it.' In ſuch a caſe, it would happen now and then, that one of the family, touched a little with the abſurdity of this phlegmatick ſpeech, would anſwer, 'That very well he might make himſelf 'eaſy, ſince, all the while, he was well fed and 'clothed at their expence.' This he would receive with ſilent contempt, and diſplay the greateſt ſatisfaction in his own compoſure of ſpirit, and meekneſs of temper.

As for the remaining part of the nation, they reflected very little upon their condition, but took ſuch Servants as were ſent to them, and rubbed on as well as they could. Such quiet and paſſive people were highly extolled by the Servants, who took all opportunities of declaring, that they were the only ſolid and rational perſons in the whole kingdom. Theſe praiſes delighted them greatly; ſo that they lived as poor and as merry as beggars, who have nothing to hope, and nothing to fear.

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CONCLUSION.

THUS I have given the reader an acccount of this extraordinary claſs of men; and I am certain, he muſt confeſs, there is ſomething in their characters and conduct, proper to excite a mixture of laughter and indignation. It is alſo probable, that he feels a conſiderable degree of ſympathy with the deluded and oppreſſed people, and is anxious to know, whether there appeared any proſpect of deliverance. This was a queſtion I often aſked at my informer, who aſſured me that, from what he had heard and ſeen, there was not the moſt diſtant proſpect of reformation by the Servants themſelves. The honeſter ſort were always borne down, traduced and ſlandered; and thoſe of an oppoſite character had ſo long kept the management of the corporation in their hands, that they reckoned themſelves ſecure in their authority, and openly ſet at defiance both the people in general, and their fellow Servants.

There remained juſt a glimpſe of hope from one quarter, viz. the gentlemen who had been choſen to the office of helpers. They had at firſt contributed as much as any to the introduction of wrong meaſures; but, not being under the temptation of intereſt, they began to open their eyes at laſt. For ſome years they had been a conſiderable reſtraint upon the violence of the Servants,

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and had prevented them in ſeveral inſtances from degrading, ſtripping, and branding thoſe who had incurred their diſpleaſure, by doing buſineſs at unſeaſonable hours. They had alſo contributed to the diſgrace and diſmiſſion of ſome drunken ſots, and laſcivious wretches, whom ſeveral of the leading Servants had a ſtrong inclination to ſpare. From theſe circumſtances, ſome flattered themſelves that a change might be brought about; and that though the Servants would never think of any reformation themſelves, it would ſoon be 'forced upon them by a foreign hand.'

After all, it was but very uncertain whether any material change would ſoon take place; and therefore, while we can only ſend that unhappy people our good wiſhes, we have reaſon to rejoice in our own good fortune, that we are perfectly free from impoſitions of the ſame or any ſimilar kind.

FINIS